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Security Council

Seventieth year

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Thursday, 20 August 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Consolidating Security Council engagement on security sector reform: towards further implementation of resolution 2151 (2014)

Letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/614)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Consolidating Security Council engagement on security sector reform: towards further implementation of resolution 2151 (2014)

Letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2015/614)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/614, which contains the text of a letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Mr. Titov.

Mr. Titov: On behalf of Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous, I am glad to take part in this important meeting. I wish to thank you, Ambassador Ogwu, for this timely initiative and for your special personal leadership on this strategic issue. We particularly appreciate the background paper (S/2015/614, annex) circulated by Nigeria for this meeting; it articulates many important questions, especially those with which we are dealing.

I would also like to pay special tribute to Slovakia and South Africa for their long-standing and very dedicated service as co-Chairs of the United Nations Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform and for their many efforts in support of resolution 2151 (2014), including its implementation in the field.

Last year, while briefing the Council, the Secretary-General said, "The purpose of security sector reform, simply put, is to make people's lives safer" (S/PV.7161, p.2). We could not agree more. Well-trained, well-supported, accountable and service-oriented police and military professionals are a country's best defence against the violence and instability that threaten both lives and livelihoods. From the perspective of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the Council is right to do more to strengthen legitimate institutions and governance, not only to break cycles of violence, but also to provide citizen security, justice and economic growth.

A quick scan of Foreign Policy's 2015 Fragile States Index demonstrates the strong correlation between the performance of the security apparatus and overall fragility. The five most fragile countries in this index — South Sudan, Somalia, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo — are all vivid reminders that a country's security sector is closely linked with both the perception of State legitimacy and long-term socioeconomic and political development.

For this reason, DPKO believes that, depending on specific circumstances, security-sector management and professionalization should be at the core of peace operations' mandates and activities.

Understandably, some Member States express caution about the United Nations engagement in security-sector management. However, the philosophy of the United Nations practice has been simple: security-sector reform (SSR) can be achieved only if host countries themselves agree to it. No one can impose or import a security system. That simply does not work, at least in the long term. The role of the United Nations is to support nationally owned SSR efforts when mandated or requested to do so. At the same time, it is our obligation to share the best international practices with recipient States.

Over the past 16 months, the Council has adopted 21 resolutions containing elements of security-sector reform and management. In 17 peace operations conducted globally, the United Nations is actively helping host countries professionalize their security sector, so that they themselves can better support their nations in addressing national and regional security

threats, including terrorism, violent extremism and organized crime.

In the field, we are focusing on four central priorities which are explicit in resolution 2151 (2014).

First, the United Nations views SSR as a political process as much as a technical one. To train and equip is indispensable in post-conflict situations. But as demonstrated in a variety of mission contexts, security-sector management is most effective when it is also linked to broader reforms.

In Mali, for example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali provided its technical expertise during the development of the recently signed Peace Agreement. The Mission is now helping Malian authorities as they prepare to integrate armed groups into the national security forces and revise the presidential decree on the National Council on Security Sector Reform. Together with the European Union and other partners, training is ongoing for the national army, police and gendarmerie, along with mentoring in the field. We are also engaged in building the Malian anti-organized-crime capacity, and, together with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL, DPKO is actively doing the same in other West African countries.

In the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) helped the Government to develop its draft Constitution, which, as a result, now includes defence and security provisions. In addition, 2,000 members of the Central African armed forces have been preliminarily vetted, which has already led to the reinstatement of the First Territorial Infantry Battalion.

Secondly, the international community must focus on the need to integrate sector-wide delivery. The security sector does not only cover defence; it includes justice and corrections, policing, border management and other areas. Building the capacity of each of these services should preferably be balanced and mutually reinforcing.

In Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the Government are implementing a security sector public expenditure review, which will help develop a sustainable security architecture. The Mission is also helping integrate militia forces into the Somali National Army and to strengthen the capacity of 11,000 officers in the Somali National Army so that they will able to engage with the African Union Mission in Somalia. On policing, UNSOM has also assisted the Government in developing a comprehensive plan that includes training, infrastructure development and equipment for police in Mogadishu and beyond.

The United Nations provides similar, multifaceted support in Guinea-Bissau. I know that the has Council received a briefing from the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) on the political situation in that country last Friday. The United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau has advised the Government to develop a new law on the establishment of the special pension fund. This legislation will pave the way for the retirement of almost 1,500 personnel in the armed forces and security sector.

Thirdly, in the spirit of national ownership, we support Governments in their efforts to develop State security plans and convene international partners around those plans. In Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has responded to the requests of the Council by working with the Government to produce a transition plan that is largely focused on the security sector. UNMIL has also trained almost 3,000 police officers and supported the review of the national security strategy, while the bilateral partners have assisted with the national army and specialized police.

Meanwhile, the support of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti for the vetting of national police officers has resulted in an additional 1,200 certified national police officers, thereby making progress towards the goals of the national police development plan. This effort complements the training that the United Nations — again, together with donors — has provided to 14,000 Haitian National Police officers and over 200 corrections officers over several years. All of this training is undertaken on the basis of United Nations standards, human rights law and due diligence policy.

Fourthly, building strong and accountable security sectors helps the United Nations to deliver on key mandated activities, including the protection of civilians, the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, and others. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, United Nations police deployed recently alongside the Congolese National Police to mentor, advise and help protect civilians in the troubled town of Beni, where armed groups were launching

deadly attacks on the population. Colleagues from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also manage the prosecution support cells programme, which has helped the military justice system of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to reduce impunity and address conflict-related sexual violence. This is an integral United Nations activity in many operations.

All of these are only examples, which demonstrate the concrete action of my colleagues from DPKO in the field on a daily basis. Yet I must acknowledge that the whole system could do better. In South Sudan, for example, the United Nations did not manage the security dialogue properly or effectively, which contributed to the unravelling of peace. The lack of success in this context demonstrates the political imperative for sustained and well-resourced efforts towards SSR in peace operations.

Within the framework of the inter-agency Security Sector Task Force, DPKO's special unit dedicated to security sector management has also carried out a number of other system-wide initiatives, including — again, as only one example — support to DPA in its efforts in Iraq and earlier in Libya. With colleagues from the United Nations Development Programme, who will also speak this morning, we hope to increase our engagement with other partners, including the Peacebuilding Support Office and the World Bank.

Meanwhile, DPKO has also undertaken mapping initiatives with regional partners, including the European Union and the African Union (AU). Over the past five years, the Department has built a serious, strategic partnership with the African Union Commission. This has resulted in the adoption of the first and unique African Union policy framework on SSR. As stressed in resolution 2151 (2014), we need to enhance cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, including regional economic communities, in order to ensure the compatibility of approaches and closer coordination. Through all the initiatives we have mentioned this morning, DPKO is also trying to address a number of persistent challenges. Therefore, we would like to propose a few recommendations for the Council's future consideration.

First, SSR is sometimes viewed as a technical process, while it could and should provide crucial solutions to some political engagements. Moreover, there are instances when United Nations support to SSR comes too little and too. Security sector management should obviously concentrate on post-conflict situations, but it could also be used for prevention purposes in some specific contexts. Furthermore, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General should be empowered and indeed encouraged to take initiative and ownership on security sector management issues. I stress that this should be done from the earliest days of the mission onwards. This should not be seen as a second- or third-tier activity, and progress towards security sector benchmarks should be embedded into any mission's entry and exit strategies.

Secondly, commitments to strengthening the security sector, whether on the part of international partners or host States, are often difficult to formalize, especially when they come at the later stages of United Nations intervention. The Council could consider requesting that host States and the United Nations agree on special compacts — which the Council has already discussed informally — in the security sector and wider governance areas. That should be done at the time when operations are being established, and could help in implementing specific reforms and allocating national resources in a sustained manner and based on national commitments.

Thirdly, I believe that we in DPKO could better serve the Security Council by increasing our engagement with its members on SSR. Already, having had two briefings in two years dedicated to this strategic topic is a step in the right direction, and the Council should perhaps encourage us, through the Secretary-General's reports, to provide more detailed information on national and international efforts in this vital area, as well as on the whole issue of peace sustainment.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate that any peace operation should ideally leave behind at least a basic functioning security and rule-of-law system. From our perspective, this should be considered a strategic priority goal for most of our operations, so that the Council will not be seized over and over again with relapsing conflicts, human suffering, impunity and instability.

The President: I thank Mr. Titov for his statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bangura.

Ms. Bangura: I thank you, Madam President, for extending an invitation to me to brief the Security Council on matters related to the important cross-cutting issue of security sector reform (SSR). It is a pleasure to join my colleagues from the Department

of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in addressing the Council today.

For a number of years, as we have progressively shifted the conflict-related sexual violence agenda to the operational level, we have recognized the critical nexus between sexual violence crimes and dysfunctional security sector reform processes, or the incomplete disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of former combatants. Indeed, the Security Council has already articulated the crucial connection between security-sector reform and conflict-related sexual violence in a number of resolutions, including resolution 2106 (2013), on sexual violence in conflict in 2013, as well as resolution 2151 (2014), the first thematic resolution on security-sector reform, which was sponsored by Nigeria in 2014.

Essentially, a comprehensive response to conflict-related sexual violence must include proactive and purposeful engagement with the security sector, particularly in settings where the security services may have been involved in the commission of sexual violence. Such engagement with the security sector has now become part of the modus operandi of our mandate. I welcome this opportunity to highlight some of our emerging experience and practice in that regard.

Through our monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements, mandated under resolution 1960 (2010), we have been able to verify that a number of national security services, including national armed forces and national police, are among the perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence crimes. Therefore, we have encouraged national authorities to respond accordingly, and are supporting them in a process to strengthen their institutional capacity to monitor and ensure accountability within the security forces.

As I have stressed repeatedly, the essential starting point is to ensure national ownership, leadership and responsibility. Accordingly, I have focused especially on gaining commitments at the highest political levels through my advocacy. Over the past two years in particular, we have been able to report consistently to the Security Council with regard to commitments obtained from political and military leaders in a number of our priority countries.

For example, in the past few years we have signed political-level agreements in the form of joint communiqués with the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Somalia and South Sudan. Those agreements form the basis for ongoing engagement at strategic and operational levels, for the practical implementation of the commitments made. The Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict supports the Governments with technical and logistical assistance to turn those high-level political agreements into concrete actions and activities to be undertaken by the Governments. The Team of Experts reports to me and — with members of the team from DPKO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, led by a Director in my Office — represents one of the best and most innovative examples of the One UN initiative.

The commitments they help to operationalize entail some fundamental reforms of the security sector, in line with resolution 2106 (2013). They include, first, issuing clear orders to all defence and security forces through chains of command prohibiting sexual violence and providing accountability measures for breaching such orders in accordance with international standards; secondly, ensuring that all elements joining the army, the police or other security institutions are vetted so that no element involved in the commission of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including sexual violence, is allowed to join those institutions; thirdly, prohibitions against sexual violence in codes of conduct and military and police field manuals or their equivalents; fourthly, developing action plans specific to the national army and the national policethat include, respectively, the reinforcement of the military justice system and the establishment or strengthening of special police units on sexual violence; fifthly, ensuring that perpetrators of sexual violence crimes are excluded from amnesty provisions in the context of conflict-resolution processes, and that all those who have perpetrated or are responsible for acts of sexual violence are excluded from the security institutions; sixthly, ensuring that the military and police speaks out in the strongest terms against sexual violence in conflict, including through internal and public campaigns; and, finally, ensuring that security services establish mechanisms for the protection of victims, witnesses and others who report crimes committed by the army or the police, including civil society and judicial actors engaged in the fight against conflict-related sexual violence.

The elements I have just elaborated on have formed the basis for the development of concrete operational or

implementation plans, which we refer to as action plans to prevent conflict-related sexual violence, in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where we have focused consistent attention since the establishment of the mandate, the joint communiqué signed with the Government and the action plan developed with our support by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) have begun to yield some tangible results. For instance, in the 2014 reporting period, military tribunals convicted 135 individuals of sexual violence crimes, including 76 members of the armed forces, 41 members of the national police and 18 members of armed groups. Crucially, the FARDC action plan includes specific undertakings signed by senior commanders, whereby they personally commit to prevent and respond to sexual violence through a series of actions. That has served to reinforce both individual and command responsibility.

In a number of cases, the actions undertaken to address sexual violence have resulted in significant institutional and structural reforms within the security institutions, as well as an increased number of prosecutions and convictions. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the national army has established a high-level and dedicated infrastructure in the form of an armed services commission to ensure the implementation of the action plan on sexual violence. Similarly, the national army of Côte d'Ivoire has established a committee on conflict-related sexual violence that includes senior commanding officers from the army, the gendarmerie and the police to oversee the institutional response.

Since 2013, the Team of Experts has deployed an expert to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to support military justice efforts, including in the framework of the Prosecution Support Cell. In Guinea, the Team of Experts has provided technical support to a domestic panel of judges established to investigate and prosecute crimes committed against opposition supporters on 28 September 2009, including at least 109 cases of sexual violence. That has resulted in 16 indictments, including against high-ranking military officials, and, most recently, former president Dadis Camara. That represents one of the rare times that a former Head of State has been indicted by a fully national process.

In a number of priority countries, police have established or strengthened specialized units dealing with crimes against women and children, including sexual violence crimes — for example, our mandate is supporting the establishment and functioning of such a specialized unit in the gendarmerie in the Central African Republic. Such initiatives may be viewed as an entry point and provide avenues for more fundamental reforms within those institutions. Vetting during recruitment drives and prior to the integration of armed groups into the armed forces to exclude those who have committed or commanded sexual violence represent crucial shifts in attitudes and practice, and contribute to the professionalization of the security sector.

It is also evident that where SSR or DDR processes have failed, it has sometimes contributed to the commission of sexual violence crimes. For example, we have received reports of sexual violence being committed in the post-conflict setting within communities by so-called civilians. However, in a number of such cases the perpetrators are former combatants who were demobilized under hurriedly conducted DDR processes.

Another significant challenge relates to the informal integration of militia groups into national armed forces. For the most part, such armed groups are poorly trained and have often committed gross human rights violations, which is a significant threat to the integrity and professionalism of national security institutions and hinders accountability for sexual violence crimes.

In addition to the specific points of action I have outlined here, I wish to conclude by proposing four overarching recommendations related to security-sector reform and sexual violence in conflict.

First, the role of security institutions in preventing sexual violence crimes may be enhanced by striving to mainstream sexual violence considerations consistently in security-sector reform processes, in view of the nexus between SSR and conflict-related sexual violence. That includes a specific reference by the Security Council to the prevention of sexual violence in provisions related to SSR and DDR in all relevant country-specific resolutions, as well as in the relevant provisions of peace agreements and ceasefire frameworks.

Secondly, preventing sexual violence crimes and ensuring accountability should be considered fundamental indicator criteria of success of SSR programmes as a whole and, as such, should be

included in SSR programme monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Thirdly, we should ensure that multilateral and bilateral SSR support and assistance include targeted resources and training to support national security institutions in enhancing their capacity to prevent and address crimes of sexual violence.

Fourthly, we should ensure a proportional representation of women in security institutions at all levels as the basis for the creation of security forces who respect and protect women and children in times of war and of peace.

The linkage between SSR and sexual violence will continue to be a priority focus of my mandate and a key aspect of the work of our programme, as well as that of the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, which has played a central role in supporting our engagements with national authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Guinea and elsewhere.

The President: I thank Ms. Bangura for her statement.

I now give the floor to Ms. Nakamitsu.

Ms. Nakamitsu: On behalf of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ms. Helen Clark, I would like to sincerely thank you, Madam President, for convening this very important meeting and UNDP to brief members of the Council on this crucial topic. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Nigerian delegation and you for your personal leadership on this very important issue.

Security sector reform (SSR) is a relatively new area for us, but as co-Chairs of both the United Nations inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and UNDP increasingly reap the benefits of working closely together to sustain peace in settings where Security Council mandates apply. Resolution 2151 (2014) highlights aspects of security that are particularly important to UNDP. It emphasizes people's safety, human rights and democratic oversight in the security sector. These are essential foundations for the rule of law, peace and sustainable development.

The proposed goal 16, on peaceful, just and inclusive societies of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development further recognizes the important linkages between peace and development and urges Member States to promote the rule of law, safety and justice. It also calls for effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels. This also applies to the security institutions responsible for providing a safe and secure environment to people and communities. Please allow me to highlight briefly three essential ingredients for successful SSR implementation in post-conflict environments from the UNDP perspectives.

First, security sector reform is a long-term process, and we must understand and accept that SSR requires both concerted efforts in the lifetime of United Nations peace operations and long-term sustained efforts and support beyond peace operations. It is therefore critical to sequence and strategically prioritize various tasks. Security Council mandates on SSR have become more comprehensive, requiring United Nations peace operations to implement an increasingly wide range of SSR tasks. But we also know that addressing the negative power bases in the security services of post-conflict countries is one of the most challenging aspects of post-conflict reconstruction and transformation. In fact, it is one of the structural causes that had led those countries to violent conflicts in the first place. Military and security cadres often have vested interests in the political settlements that follow peace agreements.

Therefore, it is not easy to resolve these challenges. This means that the implementation of holistic approaches to SSR by the United Nations requires a sustained focus on building political will for meaningful reforms. Strong political support from the Council will be key in that regard, and therefore Mr. Titov's suggestion of a possible compact is indeed an interesting one. At the same time, national capacity-building efforts that will continue over time need to be supported by predictable and reliable sources of funding. In order to be effective, such efforts must be carried out in a conflict-sensitive manner and be built into longer-term development assistance programming.

Secondly, at the country level, as Mr. Titov pointed out, we must have the right balance and combination of technical expertise and guidance, on the one hand, and political accompaniment, on the other, for a successful SSR. In order for the United Nations to make a difference in this area, we must find ways for peace operations to work closely with country teams in an integrated manner, and we must strive to use our

collective resources and capacities more efficiently and in a more impactful way.

As underscored by the recent report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (see S/2015/446), such joint approaches are a necessity for enhancing operational coherence. We are pleased to see acknowledgement in the Panel's report that Mission budgets should ensure that funds for programming are available to support that work as well as the recognition that United Nations agencies, such as UNDP, are well placed to support peace operations in that regard. The fact that the Council invited UNDP to brief it today is further testimony that our programming work, which brings together the required technical expertise, is indeed an important part of the implementation of the mandates given to the United Nations.

By working together, the United Nations is more capable of delivering those comprehensive mandates. For example, linking police salary payments with support to improved community policing on issues related to gender-based violence and with better recruitment and training of cadets makes eminent sense and is already delivering positive results on the ground, as seen in Somalia. There, UNDP works with the Global Focal Point partners, DPKO and UN-Women, as well as the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, in delivering a joint rule-of-law programme that includes training and mentoring for the Puntland police force. Through the programme, we are supporting 25 police officers, including six women, who are studying criminal science thanks to a police scholarship initiative developed in partnership with Puntland State University. This might seem like a small initiative, but we are investing in creating and supporting the leadership of a police force that will put people's security and safety at the core of their service.

In another case, UNDP, through a joint initiative with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, UN-Women and the Global Focal Point, redeployed police and gendarmerie forces in the Central African Republic by supplying general food allowances and salary payments. Those efforts allowed justice sector activities to resume and reduced cases of robbery, including armed robbery, in the country.

Thirdly, for SSR to succeed, we must have a coherent strategy among all actors who support it — from the United Nations, regional organizations and other Member States — and the full ownership, leadership and political commitment of national stakeholders. Successful SSR requires support and investment from Member States, whether through development support, Government-provided personnel or direct cooperation, to reinforce and complement United Nations efforts. We have many lessons learned over past decades in that regard — for example, from Afghanistan. In other places, such as the Central African Republic, Mali and Somalia, where many actors are involved, we have also learned that better coordination efforts between regional entities and the United Nations should be prioritized to enhance our collective impact.

Within the United Nations system, coordination between United Nations missions and country teams should commence as soon as Security Council mandates on SSR are established and should be linked to joint planning undertaken by the global focal point, which encompasses important aspects of SSR, especially on police reform. I very much agree with Mr. Titov's statement that SSR is not only about the defence sector.

For reforms to be sustainable, joint programmes need to be aligned with national development plans and national budgets. I would also add that joint engagement throughout the lifetime of a mission will also help the United Nations to manage smooth transitions as missions draw down.

In conclusion, let me stress that the United Nations system needs to translate security sector reform in post-conflict settings into tangible results that are immediately felt by ordinary people on the street. As I stated earlier, SSR is a long-term process. However, for UNDP it is the number one priority in the lifespan of United Nations peace operations. We must look at security in the broader context of promoting safe and secure environments for communities and people, especially for women, and in terms of facilitating people's participation in efforts to strengthen and reform security institutions.

We must also pay more attention to advancing gender equality and security for women, as Special Representative Bangura pointed out. Although this year marks the tenth year anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we continue to see high levels of violence against women and girls in conflict and, unfortunately, high levels of impunity. Those situations require a comprehensive and coordinated response on the part of the United Nations system and the international community. Only

by promoting people's security and safety and human rights and democratic oversight in the security sector, can we lay the foundation for the rule of law, peace and sustainable development.

The President: I thank Ms. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank the Nigerian delegation for convening today's meeting on the issue of security sector reform (SSR). We are also grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Titov, Assistant Secretary-General Nakamitsu and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura for their detailed briefings.

Security sector reform is one of the most important components of peacekeeping during the post-conflict period. Relevant measures help not only in achieving national reconciliation, but also in ensuring the security of State institutions, thereby promoting effective civilian protection, strengthening stability and preventing the emergence of new violence.

Undoubtedly, security sector reform should be conducted in the context of broader rebuilding processes, including a package of efforts on the political, economic and social fronts. Only a holistic approach will provide hope for lasting peace and security. The success of security sector reform depends, first and foremost, on ownership on the part of national Governments and their determination to take responsible efforts in drafting and implementing national strategies and priorities in that sphere.

A lack of progress in security sector reform was one of the basic causes of an escalation of armed conflict in South Sudan, where national armed forces broke into warring camps. Another negative example was the situation preceding the military coup d'état in the Central African Republic in the spring of 2014, where the army and police did not reflect either the ethnic or the religious composition of the population. They also lacked proper equipment and training due, in part, to fears of former President Bozizé of threats to his power.

It is unfortunate that in a number of cases of countries experiencing conflict situations, they are unable, without outside support, to ensure security and rebuild viable and effective State institutions. In such situations, assistance from the international community is of critical importance. Such assistance should be guided by fundamental principles, including the host country's agreement, respect for its national sovereignty and political independence. Such efforts must also focus on strengthening national capacities, based on the country's specific situation.

A central role in coordinating and agreeing upon SSR efforts should be played by the United Nations, which has a diverse toolkit of effective instruments. First and foremost I am thinking of Security Council authorized peacekeeping missions. Peacekeepers' multifaceted mandates include tasks aimed at assisting with SSR, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts and rebuilding law-and-order structures and the rule of law in general. Outstanding work in that area is also carried out by the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Commission, whose complementary significantly increases the chances for establishing sound, accountable and professional national security bodies.

In the current context there is also need to take into account the regional aspects of conflict and the transborder nature of threats, in cases where a spike in violence in one country could ignite violence in neighbouring countries and, indeed, in the region as a whole. In that context, it is of great importance to develop cooperation between and among the States of the region, was well as with regional and subregional organizations. Such cooperation should include information exchange of frontline experience and providing resources to ensure swift and effective responses to emerging threats.

In conclusion we would like to underscore the Russian Federation's commitment to developing international cooperation in SSR, including in peacekeeping operations and providing peacekeeping staff with the necessary expertise and equipment, including advanced training for peacekeepers on United Nations standards.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this briefing. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Dmitry Titov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Hawa Bangura and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, for their insights and comprehensive briefings to the Security Council.

At the Council's debate on security sector reform (SSR) last year (see S/PV.7161), we called on the United Nations to do more to help States coming out of conflict to reform their police and military forces. We advocated for reinforced efforts to ensure that security institutions in post-conflict environments were a source of safety, security and trust, rather than of extortion and fear. Over a year since that debate and the adoption of resolution 2151 (2014), we can ask ourselves if enough is being done to put the resolution into action. Are the voices of women, youth and civil society being heard well enough by those implementing SSR efforts? Is the vetting effective enough to bar those who have committed rape and abuse from joining police and military ranks? Have we become better in meeting the needs of the countries concerned?

As has been said many times, ensuring national ownership of SRR processes is essential. To succeed, national authorities must lead, own and drive reform efforts. The United Nations and other contributing actors on the ground can assist Governments in their efforts, with a clear objective to create effective, accountable and human rights-respecting national security structures. In that regard, we welcome the Department of Peacekeeping Operations compact initiative aimed at helping to better coordinate responsibilities between the United Nations and national Governments.

As we have heard this morning, the subject itself is wide-ranging, and I cannot deal with all of the issues. I would like to touch upon just a few of them, starting with trust.

While the pressure to rebuild security sector institutions as a country emerges out of conflict may be enormous, Governments must make sure that SSR activities involve all segments of society and respond to the concerns of all, including the most affected and vulnerable groups. That is the best way to ensure the common ownership of the reform and to prevent lingering grievances from resurfacing at a later stage. The support of the good offices of the United Nations in that respect could be helpful.

An army or a local police force made up exclusively of one ethnicity, one tribe or one faith in multi-ethnic, multireligious communities would inevitably challenge their impartiality and put into question their readiness to protect all members of the community. It would also serve to raise fears and suspicions of bias — for example, in situations such as the violence we have witnessed in the Central African Republic.

Likewise, an exclusively male police force, or prosecutorial bodies, for that matter, would raise legitimate concerns and fears among women about their safety and security and would inevitably prevent women from complaining about sexual violence, rape and other abuses. Integrating a gender perspective into security sector reform is therefore a question of trust and confidence in the bodies and in the reform itself. A gender perspective must become part of the daily work of armed forces, police and law-and-order institutions. It should make those institutions more inclusive and accountable, strengthen popular trust in them and improve the overall effectiveness of security sector reform. Specific programmes aimed at preventing sexual harassment and gender-based violence must be implemented so that both the general female population and the women serving in the armed and police forces are guaranteed safety and recourse to justice in cases of abuse. Witness and victim protection mechanisms must also be put in place.

In that regard, we would like to emphasize the importance of the Secretary-General's seven-point action plan on women's participation in peacebuilding, as well as the whole range of measures that the United Nations has established to date, including on the matter referred to today by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. They offer practical ways forward that should be taken by the United Nations system, with the support of Member States, regional partners and implementing countries.

Justice and accountability are other factors linked to security sector reform, and an underlying element for SSR durability. They are an integral part of peace and reconciliation efforts. If left unaddressed, a lack of accountability for past crimes can lead to a reopening of old wounds — and therefore a resurgence of conflict, bringing the efforts of any country emerging out of conflict to naught. Therefore, security sector reform should entail, inter alia, solid human rights training, mentoring, due diligence policies and an embedded culture of individual responsibility among the ranks — from top to bottom and bottom to top — for abuses of office, including human rights abuses.

In countries plagued by repeated cycles of violence, members of the security forces are known to have participated in serious human rights abuses and crimes against humanity, including killings, summary executions, mass rapes, torture, arbitrary arrests and abductions. Vetting mechanisms therefore should be a

central component of troop selection in order to break with past abuses and build disciplined, rights-respecting forces that protect civilians instead of preying on them. Cleaning up the ranks also serves to strengthen the trust between local populations and the armed and police forces, as well as the general confidence in the irreversibility of post-conflict recovery.

In that regard, we welcome the steps taken by the Democratic Republic of the Congo to introduce vetting and build a security sector free from child recruitment and sexual violence. We encourage the Government to further develop cooperation with United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) in implementing a zero-tolerance policy towards violations of human rights law and humanitarian law.

Verification and vetting are currently being undertaken in the Central African Republic, where preparations are under way for the national elections. The pressure to have the armed forces in place and ready to provide security for the people during that vital transition time should not lead to compromising on the integrity of the troops. As per resolution 2217 (2015), the transitional authorities must investigate swiftly alleged violations and abuses in order to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure that those responsible for such violations and abuses are excluded from the security sector. Granted, it is a challenging task, and the assistance of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic in that respect remains very important.

The sharing of information and cooperation between national authorities and peacekeeping missions, as well as with the relevant international actors, contribute to the success of the vetting process. In that regard, we would like to welcome the efforts in Côte d'Ivoire, where the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry of the Interior are developing terms of reference for police vetting.

Finally, the success of security sector reform requires having a clear picture on how effective particular measures have been — what works and what does not in a given situation — and how best to avoid the typical mistakes in the process. The implementation of monitoring instruments, such as sets of indicators and benchmarks like those developed in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, have an important role to play in ensuring the sustained relevance and effectiveness of the support provided to national Governments. In that context, a specific focus during Security Council's visits on issues raised by the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, as well as an annual closed-door briefing by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on the implementation of resolution 2151 (2014), as proposed by the Nigerian presidency in its concept note (S/2015/614,annex), could offer a useful venue for discussion and exchange on lessons learned.

Finally, let us not forget the system-wide, holistic, long-term approach, as underlined by the Assistant Administrator of UNDP, as well as the underlying linkages between SSR and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) processes. If DDR fails, if it is only partial or incomplete, conducting solid and durable reform of the security sector will be hard to achieve.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank all the briefers: Mr. Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions; Ms. Nikamitsu, Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme; and Ms. Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. I also thank Nigeria for convening today's meeting.

The previous debate by the Security Council on security sector reform (SSR) (see S/PV.7161) made it abundantly clear that that concept is important in post-conflict situations, including its contribution to establishing a modern State that is committed to the rule of law, good governance and the avoidance of relapse into conflict. Thanks to efforts made by Nigeria, the Security Council adopted resolution 2151 (2014), the first resolution devoted solely to SSR. As we meet today to consider the implementation of the resolution, we stress the importance of the Security Council's consideration of SSR in a complementary manner and in conjunction with debates regarding peacebuilding processes.

We have already set out our position on SSR in terms of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. We have also emphasized that United Nations engagement should always be based on certain basic principles, namely, that host countries have the primary responsibility for providing security; the need to respect national ownership; and their sovereign right to determine their own national priorities. It is important for national authorities to be kept informed and to provide for populations' needs and aspirations. However, we stress

the new challenges confronting SSR, especially given the increasing complexity and the increase in the number of peacekeeping mandates.

I wish to thank the delegation of Nigeria for its useful concept note (S/2015/614, annex), which indicates clearly some of the challenges we must consider in order achieve our primary goal of creating sustainable and efficient security structures that are accountable and take into consideration the rule of law, international human rights law and international standards.

The way for the Security Council to engage genuinely with the issue of security sector reform in post-conflict situations is by establishing transparent cooperation among itself, the troop contributors to peacekeeping operations, the Secretariat and host countries, particularly during the consultations on drafting and renewing the mandates of peacekeeping operations and special political missions.

We cannot overlook the political nature of SSR, especially in countries recovering from conflict. We should recognize that it can be used as an integral part of the wider political process and as an element in mediation plans aimed at launching a national dialogue and helping to achieve a political solution in many of the cases on the Council's agenda. We therefore call for concerted and integrated efforts on the part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), so that the DPKO can benefit from DPA's evaluations of the political platforms and positions of all the parties in each situation. We call for SSR to be included in the plans and proposals of the Mediation Support Unit. We hope that the heads and chiefs of United Nations special political missions and the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General will take note of and consider those plans with the aim of achieving successful security sector reform. We also believe that SSR units should be supported so that they can provide advice and in order to increase the levels of cooperation and coordination with regional and subregional organizations.

The Council can be more effective in bringing about security sector reform by drafting peacekeeping mandates clearly and giving priority to SSR in the peacekeeping operations that require that essential element, thereby ensuring that host countries can clearly interpret their mandates and that United Nations entities are able to effectively implement the SSR provisions. The Council will also be better able to address non-traditional challenges by focusing the counter-terrorism committees' work so that they specifically target efforts to build new and more modern States in countries emerging from conflict. It should also ensure the establishment of an environment conducive to ensuring the success of SSR by giving particular attention to arms embargoes and exceptions to them that can ensure support for national security institutions.

The United Nations has a pivotal role to play in supporting SSR in post-conflict situations and in States undergoing political transition by focusing on host countries' national requirements and by fulfilling their needs. We should encourage support for the security sector through such means as the provision of training, financial and technical support and cooperation with regional organizations.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this important meeting and for your personal leadership and leadership of the Nigerian delegation on the issue of advancing security sector reform. It is critical and appropriate that the Security Council emphasize the role of security sector reform in making local institutions more effective and accountable and fostering both a sense of and actual safety and security. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-Generals Titov and Nakamitsu and Special Representative Bangura for their briefings.

As the Security Council reaffirmed in April 2014 when we adopted the first ever resolution focused solely on security sector reform (resolution 2151 (2014)), such reform is an essential aspect of prevention, and focusing on preventing conflict or relapses into it is something that we must all do more of and become better at doing. Security sector reform helps build accountable, effective and efficient institutions and provides a foundation for resilience in fragile States. It also provides a foundation for the rule of law and respect for human rights. Resolution 2151 (2014) rightly emphasized national ownership; indeed, some of the Security Council's most complex missions, such as in Kosovo and Timor-Leste, have succeeded because of the national authorities' commitment to achieving reforms in partnership with the international community. In Liberia, efforts have led to an increase in the number of women working in the security sector, a strong focus on community policing and increased training on human rights and gender issues. Sierra Leone has taken a holistic approach to security sector

reform that has included disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the establishment of a special court and the reform of security institutions.

But we have also seen, for example in the recent history of the Central African Republic, that when attention fades, progress may too. The Government of the Central African Republic launched a vigorous security sector reform campaign in 2008, starting with an international security sector reform assessment of the country's needs and the establishment of a timeline for achieving its security sector goals. While the Government was making progress, having implemented some 70 per cent of the plan within a year, its programmes were both financially costly and politically difficult. They fell by the wayside. Instead of pursuing the integration that was needed, the Government held on to its resources, never fully integrated the police and the army, and allowed the process to get caught in political patronage and internal bureaucratic wrangling, all of which contributed to the violence that surged up again in 2012.

Sustaining the reform of security institutions is critical not only to making people safe but also to preventing relapses into war. National ownership of security sector reform is essential, but it should not mean that the international community in general, or the Security Council in particular, should be passive as time goes on. When the memory of conflict begins to fade, and host Governments are confronting the hardest and most difficult challenges, that is when we have a particular responsibility to support, encourage and press for completion of security sector initiatives.

We welcome the idea described by Assistant Secretary-General Titov of a security sector reform compact between the United Nations and host Governments. When a Government's focus on completing reforms wanes, we have a responsibility to use the Security Council and the good offices of the Secretary-General to remind national leaders of their part in such a compact. There are few places where the relapse into conflict represents a more pressing issue than in South Sudan. We have seen the devastation that war has wrought on the country's security sector and, indeed, on every other sector. A new country, once a source of great hope, has become a painful and horrifying humanitarian catastrophe. Crimes that shock the conscience are being perpetrated against the people of South Sudan and they are being perpetrated with impunity. It is time for leaders to act to end the carnage. The region and the friends of South Sudan are united.

The choice confronting the Government is plain, and it is incumbent upon us to make the consequences of failing to choose the path of peace equally clear. We must do so in support of the region, in support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, in support of the people of South Sudan, and in support of peace. War has ravaged South Sudan. It has vanquished hope; it has set back a generation; it must, and it can end. While it is our collective hope that the Government of South Sudan will sign the peace agreement that is on the table, it is also our collective responsibility to act if it does not. There is no other choice. Maintaining the status quo is only a recipe for more rape, more murder, more hunger and more devastation. It is time for us to move forward together to make the choices confronting the parties unambiguously clear and to render equally apparent our commitment to holding those who reject peace and choose the path of war accountable.

Police have a growing role in peace operations, developing host-Government institutions capable of taking over law-enforcement capabilities and often providing critical civilian protection functions. We can and should strengthen the role of United Nations policing in our peacekeeping missions by providing more institutionalized training and equipment for foreign police units and individual police advisers, and, importantly, increasing women's participation in security forces. We have seen in Darfur, with the all-female formed police unit, that increasing the number of women in policing roles advances security and helps build trust and confidence in security forces.

The entire community should be brought into security sector reform initiatives, rather than marginalized by them. We welcome Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura's engagement in working with Governments to make their institutions more effective and accountable. The participation of women in post-conflict security services is crucial to creating structures that are representative, trusted, legitimate and able to meet the security needs of all. Our collective investment in helping strengthen security sectors is an investment in creating reliable partners to not just build safe and stable societies at home, but also to play an active role in defeating transnational threats everywhere. It is an investment in protecting conflict, and it is an investment in peace and stability.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): Let me start by thanking Nigeria for organizing this debate on a very important topic. I am extremely pleased to bring back this topic to the Council, where it is crucial to have this discussion on security sector reform (SSR). We join other members of the Council in welcoming the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Dmitry Tivov. We also welcome Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.

Security sector reform is indeed an important aspect of multidimensional peace operations. Where peacekeeping operations are required to create an effective, professional and responsible security sector, SSR is one of the critical elements of the foundations of peace and sustainable development. In that regard, we reiterate the point already referred to by other speakers, who emphasized that SSR must be based on national ownership in order to be possible. It is also recognized that successful, sustainable and nationally led security sector reforms require focused efforts, dedicated resources and the concerted political will of all the parties involved.

In Angola, in order to ensure the success of SSR, a legal framework for national dialogue on security sector reform has been created. It involves a programme for the technical and professional training of demobilized personnel, and the promotion of and training in entrepreneurship for former combatants as a means of promoting the social integration into civil society of thousands of men and women coming from disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes implemented in the country, in particular at the end of a long civil war. In that ongoing process, it has also been possible, through the recruitment of new entrants into the army and police, to involve them in an effective nation-building process as they are trained to play a role not just in security, but also in the various forms of nation-building under way in the country.

We stress that security sector reform should be based on participatory commitments and fully include the widest range of stakeholders, including civil society. In that connection, it is important to enhance the host country's ability to develop, manage and implement reforms that should be flexible, adaptable and tailored to the post-conflict country's concerns and needs.

Resolution 2151 (2014) — the first stand-alone Security Council resolution concerning SSR — is a milestone decision that has impacted a wide range of mandates given to United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions. The main challenge to security sector reform remains the deficiency of actual political will to reform, as we have seen in different countries on the agenda of the Security Council. We must therefore recognize that reforming a country's security sector is a political endeavour and must not be treated as a strictly technical matter. United Nations peacekeeping and special political missions must ensure therefore that Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, through their good offices, engage in intense political dialogue on SSR in the country to which they are assigned at the earliest stage of their mission. Security sector reform remains a crucial tool not only for conflict prevention in post-conflict States, but also in the prevention of post-electoral violence like that which we are now seeing in Burundi.

The partnerships on SSR of the United Nations with regional organizations, such as the African Union and European Union, have in the past been a sound foundation that has enabled the implementation of a comprehensive SSR process with coordinated information-sharing developing into an effective division of labour. When implementing SSR in the field, those partnerships should form the basis on which Special Representatives of the Secretary-General ensure that a comprehensive SSR process is thoroughly coordinated with information-sharing and developed into an effective division of labour. The technical guidance and guidelines of the United Nations system integrated into SSR can be improved through regular consultations with Member States, in order for the Secretariat to continue to update and elaborate new guidelines, including the development of training modules based on best practices.

In countries with ongoing DDR and SSR programmes, the United Nations should provide information to the host countries' security sectors on implementation and follow-up in order to avoid the exclusion of ex-combatants and to create the best possible conditions for their integration into civilian life, which is a crucial element in the peace and consolidation process. In countries like Liberia, where the Security Council intends to end its mission, draw down or reduce the personnel of its peacekeeping mission, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council in particular should establish mechanisms to prevent

the risk of the resurgence of conflict after the United Nations mission exits. In that context, we also call on the Peacebuilding Commission to continue to play its very key advocacy role through the United Nations and international and regional financial institutions, as well as with bilateral and multilateral donors, in order to continue to mobilize logistical and financial resources in support of countries engaged in a peacebuilding process.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that security sector reform is not the only concern of post-conflict countries, but must be combined with reforms in other areas, including administration, justice, the rule of law and good governance, in order to ensure long-lasting stability.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to thank the Nigerian presidency for convening this briefing and for distributing the concept note (S/2015/614, annex). Security sector reform is a topic of vital importance. We would also like to thank Mr. Dmitry Titov, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Assistant Administrator of the Crisis Response Unit of the United Nations Development Programme.

Guaranteeing security is a basic function of the State. In post-conflict situations, security institutions, such as military and police forces, may be the most visible representatives of the State in the eyes of the general public. As a result, when those institutions are effective, responsible and professional they can have a decisive and positive effect on the population's trust in Government institutions.

The transition from weak or weakened security institutions to viable and robust ones has become a major part of United Nations efforts in post-conflict reconstruction. Indeed, 10 multidimensional peacekeeping operations now have mandates that include support for such reforms. In that regard, we acknowledge the work of the Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The restoration of Government authority and control in all sectors in the immediate aftermath of conflict is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and stability. That is why it is essential to establish effective and accountable security structures that respect the law, are sustainable and meet national priorities and the needs of the population. Such structures are crucial in order avoid a relapse into conflict. In that regard, it is vital to recognize the links between security sector reform and broader reform processes, including national reconciliation and political dialogue. As clearly pointed out in the concept note, the process of security sector reform is as political as it is technical. Such a reform process must take place within the framework of a strong sense of national ownership. The State must appropriate the process of reconciliation, inclusion and the strengthening of military and national forces with the aim of avoiding a relapse into conflict. Governments themselves must determine the priorities for conducting such reforms and coordinating their implementation; they must also take responsibility for the results. Under no circumstances should the essential vision of the reform process be imposed on the recipient State

Peace agreements often overlook the need to reform the deployment of military and police forces in States in post-conflict situations. While the need to demobilize, disarm and demilitarize former combatants is generally addressed, the equally critical need to create, reconstitute and train the military and police forces of countries emerging from conflict is not always taken up with the same dedication. The absence of security sector reform can become fundamental when the time comes to promote lasting peace and to avoid the relapse of a country emerging from civil war. We would like to stress that the political component cannot be uncoupled from the success of future reconciliation and reconstruction efforts in societies that have been battered by war, as we can see from the experience of Angola.

Avoiding a relapse into conflict requires a set of security institutions that are capable of tackling the re-emergence of insurgent groups loyal to one or the other warring party. To the degree that the military and police institutions that emerge from a peace agreement are incapable of preserving the authority of the State and guaranteeing the security of the population, the possibility of a relapse into conflict will remain latent. In addition, we must bear in mind that any effort to achieve a lasting peace that fails to integrate former combatants in the security apparatus and political and economic institutions of the State by making them part

of the solution leaves open the possibility that they will take up arms again.

Finally, the Council needs to undertake a broader, deeper discussion of the experience of security sector reform situations in countries affected by foreign military invasions and interventions that bring about the collapse of all State institutions. The traumatic and terrible experiences in Iraq and Libya should prompt a profound analysis. The collapse of State institutions in those countries as a result of foreign military intervention, as well as the social fragmentation produced by a strategy of occupying and dominating the population, including through sexual and sectarian violence as a means to punish and terrorize sectors of the population accused of supporting one group or another or the former regimes, beyond the terrible social and humanitarian effects of war itself, created fertile ground for the emergence of the terrible phenomenon of terrorism and extremism such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and other violent groups that today pose the greatest threat to peace and security in the entire region of the Middle East and North Africa. The illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons, along with political and economic support for non-State actors in the region, have become the main stimulus for the emergence of terrorist groups. The weak security forces of those brother countries, along with their lack of unity and poor training, prevent them from restoring national authority and ensuring the safety of their civilian populations, which are the victims of the atrocities perpetrated by those criminal groups. That is the terrible and disastrous reality that the Council must discuss and learn from so that it is never repeated again.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretaries-General Titov and Nakamitsu, as well as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura, for their very thoughtful briefings, as well as for the number of recommendations they made to the us, which I found very creative and which we really need to take seriously as the Council. I also pay tribute to your leadership, Madam President, for having brought this important issue back to the Council once again.

It is 18 months since we last discussed security sector reform (SSR), and in that time more than 780,000 people have been killed by armed violence. That is almost one person every minute. Only a tenth of those deaths occurred at the hands of terrorists or in full conflict situations. Too many of them occurred in countries that were emerging from conflict, where stability, security and justice have yet to be embedded. We all have a role to play to stop these deaths. Ensuring an effective and accountable security sector in these countries is a vital way of doing so.

So what can we do, as a Council and as Governments, to achieve this? I think that there are three things. First of all, we need to engage honestly and sensitively with Governments and their institutions. Security and justice are critical to stability, but if not handled properly, these issues can fuel instability. Ill-disciplined, unaccountable security forces operating in fragile political climates can just as easily create grievances as address them. We need to judge our support according to the right political preconditions. We cannot allow our enthusiasm for getting things done to undermine the help that we are trying to give.

Honest engagement can bring risk, and it often requires working with institutions that do not necessarily meet international standards for human rights transparency. But not engaging is not an option. It is precisely these institutional security and justice failures that allow crime and violence to flourish. They are among the key drivers of conflict and extremism. The Council is then left to tackle the violence and dysfunctionality that they bring.

The second point that I want to make is that we need to integrate our work on SSR into our longer-term work on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and development. We have made a good start. The fact that Assistant Secretary-General Nakamitsu is here from the United Nations Development Programme today briefing the Council is progress in itself.

In addition, for the first time, our global goals on development (SDGs) contain a goal on peace, justice and security. This goal cannot be achieved without effective, efficient security forces that can respond to citizens' needs.

But we want to see more. A fully functional and professional security sector is essential to sustainable peace and also for the timely exit of United Nations peace operations. We need better sequenced and better prioritized mandates for peacekeeping operations to achieve this, and we need effective systems to ensure that the progress made on security forces does not fall away once peacekeeping operations leave. If we get these things right, not only will we decrease the average

15-year lifespan of a peace operation, but we can avoid the tragic relapse into conflict that we see so often.

This all requires a strong requirement on the part of the international community to support countries through the whole of the conflict cycle. But it also requires national political leaders to show courage and drive reforms themselves. That is the only way to ensure that the local security sector is able to deliver for its population when a mission ends.

It is this concept of local ownership that informs my third point. Locally owned political processes are vital to the success of security-sector reform, much more so than externally imposed solutions. That is easy to say but hard to deliver. In practice, this means that efforts to build security capability in the short term must be embedded in longer-term efforts to strengthen accountability and the oversight mechanisms in ministries of defence, the interior and justice. As both Dmitry Titov and Izumi Nakamitsu have said, it means that we have to use all of the tools available to the United Nations, not just the military, to deliver security-sector reform. It means coordinated responses, and, as we heard in this Chamber earlier this week, working with regional and subregional organizations. This is the best way to ingrain coherent security-sector reform plans within peacebuilding strategies.

To succeed, we also require reform processes that are fully gender-sensitive and that incorporate the perspectives and concerns of women. As we heard today from Special Representative Bangura, gender-sensitive SSR programmes are an important tool in the fight against sexual violence. We know how much there still is to do on this.

Madam President, let me conclude by thanking you again for having brought this important issue back to the Council. It is an issue that my Government cares about deeply. This year, we will spend more than $250 million on security-sector reform. That money is making a difference. To cite just once example, in Sierra Leone it has helped the local Government improve access to security and justice for nearly 300,000 women and girls in remote districts. We support these programmes and more because we believe that security and access to justice is a basic service, on a par with health care and education. It is a fundamental right, as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We owe it to the hundreds of thousands killed since we last discussed this issue to ensure that this right is upheld.

Mr. Taula (New Zealand): I wish to thank you, Madam President, for having convened this meeting and for Nigeria's long-standing engagement in security-sector reform (SSR). I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Titov for his update and the progress made since the adoption of resolution 2151 (2014), as well as Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura and Assistant Administrator Nakamitsu for their briefings.

New Zealand considers effective SSR to be critical for sustainable peace. We recognize SSR as a strategic, long-term process, and we have seen some successes, such as in Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone. But we acknowledge that each situation is different and that tailored approaches are required. There is also a need to learn lessons from where SSR efforts have fallen short, for example in South Sudan, as noted by Mr. Titov.

As this is an inherently long-term challenge, it is important that we better coordinate Council-mandated SSR activities with related efforts by other parts of the United Nations system and other international actors and bilateral donors. As noted in the concept note for this briefing (S/2015/614, annex), Special Representatives of the Secretary-General could have a greater role to play in this regard. Although there is a heavy focus on SSR in many peacekeeping missions, SSR functions are now also being mandated across the spectrum of United Nations peace operations, from prevention to post-conflict stabilization, for example in the SPMs?? Special Programming Missions?? in Libya and Somalia and United Nations offices such as United Nations Office in West Africa.

We need to look carefully at how SSR is mandated in peace operations, particularly in the context of the peace operations review and its recommendations concerning phased mandates. We believe that it is important for SSR to be embedded in mandates from the start, including when peace agreements are being conceived and negotiated. New Zealand acknowledges the development of the United Nations 2011 policy framework for defence sector reform, and its continued implementation. While components of SSR do not work in isolation, it is critical to develop accountable, professional and effective security forces that support and adhere to the rule of law. We see merit in the Council's considering empowering Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to more directly support nationally owned security sector reform policy and implementation frameworks. We also

support the concept of SSR compacts between missions and host Governments. Those could both encourage host country engagement and tie the achievement of SSR benchmarks to the ultimate exit strategy of a mission. We also stress the importance of women's full and effective participation in SSR processes.

Given the critical nature of SSR to the ultimate success of a mission, we believe Council oversight should be improved. In order to support that, we would like to see more meaningful reporting on SSR and regular mission reports. Reporting needs to be both more consistent and of higher quality, providing a frank assessment of progress, key obstacles and options for addressing them.

In conclusion, we believe that resolution 2151 (2014) was a very important step. But we need to work harder to make SSR more effective, and therefore improve the environment for sustainable peace and security.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Nigerian presidency for having organized this meeting, and Mr. Dmitry Titov, Ms. Zainab Bangura and Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for their participation in this important debate.

Peacekeeping operations currently deployed in the field are mandated to cooperate in the reform of their respective security sectors as they seek to provide countries emerging from conflict with capacities essential to ensuring the rule of law. Broader mandates involve greater responsibilities for the United Nations system and in particular for the Council. They also require the closer attention of, among others, the Heads of mission, Special Envoys and Representatives and Force Commanders, who must grasp the strategic value of such reforms and assume leadership in ongoing coordination with national authorities, as appropriate .

From that perspective, we believe that the central objective of security sector reform remains the creation of national institutions that are subject to civil authority, effective, inclusive and accountable so to contribute to international peace and security, sustainable development and the full exercise of human rights. These reforms should be based on State policies in the long term, take advantage of existing institutional capacities, prevent their total collapse and take into consideration, inter alia, local traditions or cultural heritage. The incorporation of radical elements into permanent institutions of a State is not advisable, which is why we must find mechanisms for their demobilization and social reintegration.

However, there can be no doubt that monitoring these reforms in countries emerging from conflict must be a priority and ongoing task of the Council. Understanding that security sector reform is undertaken in specific and unique political contexts, we favour the implementation of broad and inclusive national agreements and commitments that will lay the foundations for transformative processes that ensure national ownership. The cooperation of other States and organizations can contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of these processes.

We are aware in turn that any reform requires parallel readjustments in judicial and prison systems, as well as the systematization of the training of security forces and their financing. Without the ability to prosecute criminals and without predictable economic resources, security institutions will work in a vacuum that may limit their work, at the risk of entrenching bad practices that will have to be unlearned. Responsible, transparent and efficient security forces have the enormous potential to make the people feel safe, which is essential to facilitating the processes of reconciliation and confidence-building among civil society, armed groups and the Government. We believe in an inclusive process of reform that seeks the allegiance of the people as the beneficiaries of peacebuilding and the rule of law.

We have much to learn from countries that have successfully emerged from conflict and established professional and inclusive forces that serve the rule of law. The lessons learned and best practices developed can form a kind of catalog of potential solutions and serve other countries undertaking key reforms. Under resolution 2151 (2014), we must intensify the exchange of experiences, an area where South-South cooperation can play a leading role. Latin America has deep experience in security sector reform that could be shared with other regions. In this context and by way of illustration, since 1996 Chile has maintained technical assistance programmes with the Haitian National Police whereby approximately 60 Haitian officers and non-commissioned officers are trained in the military schools of my country. That involvement has played a key character in our participation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

At the same time, it is necessary for countries undertaking reforms to consider the effective and equal

participation of women in all stages of these processes, which will also require a cultural change. The impact of such inclusion may facilitate national reconciliation and the restoration of trust between civil society and institutions. We hope that the comprehensive survey of the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) will offer guidelines in this area, including on the training of contingents with regard to the incorporation of the gender perspective and the policy of zero tolerance of violence against women, including sexual violence.

We wish to conclude by insisting that mandates be adapted to local realities and that the international community design its cooperation around national programmes and priorities, with comprehensive and coherent approaches that create strong and responsible countries and institutions able to take the path of peace.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank Nigeria for having organized today's meeting on consolidating Security Council engagement on security sector reform through the further implementation of resolution 2151 (2014). I also thank Mr. Titov, Ms. Bangura and Ms. Nakamitsu for their briefings.

Creating professional security institutions that are competent, uphold the rule of law and serve the people is a difficult and long-term undertaking that requires resources and conducive political and social conditions. Unfortunately, such factors are often lacking in countries experiencing or emerging from conflict. The engagement of the United Nations and other players is necessary to that end. Chad voted in favour of of resolution 2151 (2014). Concerned exlusively with security sector reform, it was the first resolution of its type. It reflects the key importance of security sector reform, which has become a cornerstone of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. I should like to make a few observations in that respect.

Security sector reform after conflict is critical to building peace and stability, as well as to promoting the rule of law and good governance, extending State authority and preventing relapse into conflict. The regular reports of the Secretary-General on this issue reveal that United Nations activities in support of national security sector reform initiatives encounter certain difficulties related to understanding the national political context, taking support for security sector reform into account from the very onset of the peace process, the engagement of national authorities, including transitional authorities, and security conditions in the country concerned.

My country also notes other challenges, such as institutional weaknesses in the host country and a lack or shortfall of financing and other resources. In order to overcome some of those problems, we suggest that the Security Council undertake consultations with the host country in the course of negotiating the mandate of a peacekeeping operation, with a view to identifying national priorities for the reform of the security sector. As set out in resolution 2151 (2014), national ownership and a country's own determination of its priorities on the basis of its needs and particular situation are essential. In that regard, it is up to them to determine and prioritize the make-up of the security sector, including, among others, the defence sector and the police, penal, legal, border and immigration services.

Outside stakeholders, such as countries providing assistance and regional and international organizations, including the United Nations, should take into account the concerns of the host country. In the absence of a peace agreement during a transition period where national security institutions are practically non-existent, the support of the United Nations in security sector reform is crucial in helping national authorities to develop a national programme in that regard, all the while taking their priorities into account.

Moreover, given that the African continent is where most security sector reform processes are under way, it is essential to step up the interaction between the Security Council and the African Union in connection with providing support for such efforts. In that regard, we should recall that the African Union has in place a Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform, the development of which took place against the backdrop of broad consultation with many actors concerned, including the United Nations, the member States of the African Union, African civil society and the various regional economic communities. The purpose of the Framework is to help guide member States of the African Union in transforming their security sectors, with a view to making them more effective and efficient in ensuring control in a democratic manner, while taking into account the needs of the people in the area of justice.

In addition to security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) are also important. Following disarmament, those who have

been demobilized should be provided economic opportunities in order to reintegrate into society. We underscore the fact that Chad, which has experienced a long period of conflict, has undertaken quite compelling efforts in that regard, including putting in place a DDR programme and establishing good-neighbourly relations with surrounding countries. Our efforts have resulted in an improvement of the country's security institutions, which today are contributing to preserving peace and maintaining security beyond our national borders. Chad is prepared to share its modest experience in that regard.

Given the security situation in the Sahel and in various North African countries where terrorist groups and transnational criminal networks are exploiting porous borders to carry out their illegal activities, thereby jeopardizing international peace and security, Chad would like to emphasize the importance of stepping up border security. We call upon the relevant entitites of the United Nations and on Member States to support the efforts of the countries of the region in that regard.

In conclusion, I wish to underscore the importance of security sector reform. The efforts of the United Nations to support national initiatives on security sector reform are essential, but they must take into account national ownership and the priorities of the countries concerned, in line with their needs and their specific situations, so as to generate greater synergy. Chad urges the United Nations to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union in the area of support for security sector reform in order to help African States to benefit from the process, including through the Policy Framework, without losing sight of the need to link DDR programmes with strengthened border security, in particular in countries of the Sahel experiencing manifold security issues, especially the terrorism threat.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates Nigeria's initiative to convene this meeting on security sector reform (SSR). I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Titov, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura and Assistant Administrator Nakamitsu for their respective briefings.

Security sector reform is an integral part and essential element of United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding. United Nations SSR assistance to post-conflict countries aimed at building professional, efficient and dedicated security sectors is conducive to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in recipient countries, as well as helpful in creating enabling conditions for post-conflict reconstruction in those countries.

In recent years, the United Nations has actively assisted the SSR efforts of post-conflict countries and has achieved positive results. Sierra Leone and Liberia, among other countries, have gradually restored stability, and their security sectors have once again taken on their essential responsibility for national stability. However, in some other post-conflict countries SSR continues to face considerable challenges. Member States must seriously review good practices and lessons learned and, on the basis of existing achievements, further explore how to improve SSR. China would like to make four points on this issue.

First, it is important to observe national ownership of the SSR process. The maintenance of national security is the sovereign right of a State, and the host country should have ownership of the SSR process. In assisting host countries with SSR efforts, the United Nations and other entities should respect the sovereignty and ownership of the host countries. While providing construcive assistance in line with their needs, their is also a need to avoid micromanagement. More important, a guest should never usurp the role of the host.

Secondly, the United Nations should adhere to the principle of adapting SSR to local specificities. Post-conflict countries face myriad challenges that vary from country to country, and their SSR needs vary as well. While providing assistance to countries for their SSR processes, the United Nations needs to reflect the differences in line with their realities and specific conditions. It must develop a policy for each country, while identifying priority areas and the focus for the work. Efforts should also be made to avoid stereotyping and a one-size-fits-all approach.

Thirdly, the Organization must implement policies in an integrated manner. Security sector reform is central to peacebuilding in post-conflict coutries. The United Nations should act mindful of the need to comprehensively implement peacebuilding strategies, reinforce integrated planning on SSR and ensure that SSR is closely combined with efforts to achieve national reconciliation, promote coordinated social and economic development and eradicate poverty, among other things. It should also ensure the eradication of the

root causes of conflict so as to achieve lasting peace and security.

Fourthly, regional and subregional organizations should play their full role. Over the years, the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations have done a great deal of work and build up a wealth of experience in helping post-conflict countries with their SSR efforts. The United Nations should encourage such organizations to scale up their participation in SSR and support them in playing a greater role. In addition, the United Nations should bolster its communication and coordination with the organizations concerned through information-sharing and exchanging best practices in order to build synergies on SSR.

This year, the United Nations will carry out a comprehensive review of its peacebuilding architecture in order to take stock of positive experiences in peacebuilding over the past decade and promote the peacebuilding undertaking. China has taken note of the report of the Secretary-General's Advisory Group of Experts on the issue. We also welcome the decision by the Presidents of the Security Council and the General Assembly to appoint Angola and Australia as facilitators for the intergovernmental review process. China is prepared to participate in the discussions and will work with other Member States to ensure that the review produces positive results so that the Organization will be better able to carry out its sacred responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, as it has been entrusted to do by the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Gasso Matoses (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Nigerian presidency of the Security Council for organizing this informative briefing. This is a timely debate, which certainly suitably complements the debates we have held in the past few weeks. An effective security sector is undoubtedly a guarantee of stability, peace and economic development.

We noted that a year ago resolution 2151 (2014), adopted under Nigeria's presidency, demonstrated that it was important to have such a reform at this time. We are now in an even more opportune time to assess the developments that have taken place in the past year. In the past year, we have seen more United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions receiving a mandate from the Council to deepen work in this area. For the countries immersed in conflict or in post-conflict situations, security sector reform is extraordinarily difficult. Nonetheless, there is no alternative. Without it, we would see a deepening of, or relapse into, the same conflict-charged situations.

As a result, security sector reform serves, at the same time, a healthy and preventive dimension. On the basis of the accumulated experiences and lessons learned, a question would be: How are we carrying out the mission, and are we being effective when it comes to reforming the security sector? We could talk about the issue by coordinating three principal concepts: cooperation, trust and continuity of the process.

First, allow me to begin with the first of those elements, the necessary international cooperation in this area. The main element of the security sector reform makes it one of the most sensitive structures within the State apparatus. As a result, reform must necessarily at all times be carried out under national ownership and leadership that is perfectly compatible with international support as well as the support of regional or subregional organizations. In that regard, we must highlight the importance of continuing to develop, for instance, partnerships between them and the United Nations and the African Union or with subregional organizations on the African continent, bearing in mind that it is on this continent that most countries find themselves immersed in security sector reform.

We would also like to reiterate that Spain is contributing significantly, within the framework of the European Union, to training and providing advice for security sector reform in countries such as Somalia, the Niger, Mali and the Central African Republic, as well as outside the continent, in Afghanistan. However, all these efforts would be futile without the participation of civil society in this process where the building of trust is an important element.

Secondly, an aspect I would like to comment on is that security sector reform has an important technical component. But we should not fool ourselves; it is essentially a political process, the ultimate objective of which is to enhance the trust of society in their own States, thereby strengthening State institutions. As a result, security sector reform empowered to build the necessary trust and confidence must be a process that is inclusive in the sense that the entire nation should feel that it is a part of the change taking place. When I talk about inclusiveness I also want to refer to this as a process that is sensitive to gender issues. As we heard from the speakers, women's participation in all phases

of security sector reform is crucial. We trust that will be made clear in the month of October when we will discuss the reform of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. Only in that way can we really talk about local ownership where security and peace are considered essential public goods.

Likewise, building trust means that we must bear in mind the economic and budgetary aspects of those reforms. Rational allocation of human, economic and material resources to the security sector is crucial. Lastly in that regard, it is necessary to ensure that State protection mechanisms for its citizens involve the necessary democratic control on the part of society. Security sector reform implies a high degree of political responsibility and accountability, including mechanisms that make it possible to fight against corruption. The very close relationship that exists between security sector reform and the reform of the justice sector, due to their nature, are interconnected.

Thirdly, security sector reform is an ongoing process, a medium- and long-term process, which due to its very nature has a longer life than that of United Nations peacekeeping missions. I said earlier that there are more and more peacekeeping missions with mandates related to strengthening the security sector. However, the exit strategies planned by Department of Peacekeeping Operations must be gradual and progressive. They must be drawn up according to objective, clear and verifiable parameters within the framework of a road map that defines the strategies clearly. They must be drawn up jointly with the host State, whose ownership must be encouraged to ensure that there is a proper assumption of responsibility on the part of the State on the matter of its own security sector.

There is still another element that we must bear in mind when a peacekeeping mission comes to an end. The Peacebuilding Commission plays a prominent role in this area through demonstrating the continuity of robust and well-coordinated support on the part of the international community for security sector reform. With its focus on development, the Commission acts as the third part of the peace, security and development apparatus, which we in the Chamber have established, especially through the country-specific configurations. All such international efforts must be accompanied by a sustained national effort, which would make it possible for the State to offer its citizens suitable functions and mechanisms when it comes to police and armed forces, border control, the protection of civilians and justice.

Finally, it is no wonder that the sustainable development goals that will be adopted at the next major meeting of the General Assembly in September will includes peacebuilding objectives. That gives us an idea of the importance of the sector as well as the interrelationship between peace, security and sustainable human development.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): At the outset, I wish to thank you, Madam President, and the Nigerian delegation for organizing this meeting. My delegation is of the view that the briefings today afford us an opportunity to reflect on, among other things, the role played by the United Nations in general and by the Council in particular, as well as the role of the relevant actors at the national and regional levels in implementing the security sector reform (SSR) agenda in various contexts, including those outlined in resolution 2151 (2014). In that connection, I thank you, Madam, for the detail concept note (S/2015/614, annex), which serves to frame and conceptualize our discussion today.

I join other Council members in expressing appreciation to Mr. Titov, Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict; and Ms. Izumi Nakanitsu of United Nations Development Programme, for sharing their views and perspectives, which have helped enrich our discussions today.

I wish to echo the concern expressed by Ms. Bangura in her earlier briefing to the Council (see S/PV.7428), which highlighted, among other things, the disturbing trend of increased instances of sexual violence, including rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage, particularly in the context of conflict situations and increasing violent extremism. In certain instances, security personnel are themselves guilty of practicing such heinous acts. There can be no better example of the need for SSR to become implemented in States than the evidence of those charged with the responsibility of protecting civilians.

On that note, Malaysia commends the Secretary-General for taking decisive action in responding to the allegations of sexual violence by United Nations peacekeepers. All troop-contributing countries, including those contributing national forces, must maintain vigilance and not hesitate to investigate and,

where appropriate, hold perpetrators to account to ensure that there is no impunity.

In reaffirming support for resolution 2151 (2014) and its continuing implementation, I wish to elaborate on the issue of SSR in the context of post-conflict peacebuilding. Indeed, the importance of security sector reform was among the themes raised during the Council's informal interactive dialogue on peacebuilding on 25 June. Certain key points emanating from that exchange could, in my delegation's view, frame possible responses to the challenges, questions and issues raised in the concept note for today's meeting.

For instance, Malaysia highlights that given its unique convening role, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is well placed to coordinate the participation of a wide array of critical regional and international actors to assist concerned countries, including on reform of their security sector. By bringing together security and development actors, the PBC can perform a bridging role between United Nations principal organs and actors, thereby addressing fragmentation and the duplication of efforts. In the context of reforming the security sector, which itself is a precursor to establishing an environment conducive tosustainable development and peace, this is a crucial element. At the same time, the inclusive nature of the PBC membership, drawn from the general membership of the United Nations and the Council, along with other actors, means that it is also well placed to ensure that national priorities could be factored into the Council's mandate design process. That element is particularly crucial to ensuring the buy-in of concerned countries regarding possible SSR initiatives.

Through its partnerships with regional organizations and international and national financial institutions, the PBC could help sustain the attention and commitment of the international community towards national peacebuilding priorities, with a focus on addressing drivers of conflict and building resilient institutions, including the SSR agenda. Within the context of existing peace operations, it is conceivable that such assistance could be provided in the draw-down phase. That said, it is worth highlighting that SSR efforts need not necessarily follow armed conflict.

The United Nations and a number of regional organizations have a wealth of experience and have to date built up a substantial corpus of knowledge on security sector reform. The fact that the majority of United Nations peacekeeping operations contain SSR components, each with its own peculiarity and adaptation to the situation and specific needs on the ground, indicates that the design and implementation of the SSR agenda must continue to be the product of close cooperation and collaboration among the United Nations, the concerned country and other relevant actors. In that connection, Malaysia is encouraged to note that the implementation of the African Union's policy framework on security sector reform is proceeding apace at the national, subregional and regional levels.

On the donor side, we note the strong frameworks under which the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development are assisting the overall security sector reform agenda. Ongoing efforts are necessary to coordinate actions and efforts between both donor and recipient with a view tseeking mutually satisfactory outcomes to the reform agenda.

On a related note, efforts aimed at curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their munitions, especially in conflict situations, deserve our full commitment and support. Malaysia strongly believes that limiting the supply and availability of such weapons could effectively contribute to peace initiatives and to post-conflict peacebuilding. It is for that reason, among others, that Malaysia co-sponsored resolution 2220 (2015), adopted on 22 May.

In conclusion, allow me to recap certain key points that I believe could be useful in taking forward the SSR agenda, as follows. First, SSR initiatives, particularly those spearheaded by the United Nations orother multilateral or regional actors, should remain inclusive and take into account national priorities, thereby ensuring the buy-in of concerned countries. Secondly, SSR must be recognized as not a exclusively technical but also a political exercise. A certain level of flexibility must be built into SSR initiatives, particularly at both the design and implementation phase. Thirdly, regular coordination among the various actors, including those within the United Nations system, is crucial to ensuring that efforts are not fragmented or duplicated. Finally, a key element of SSR should be a focus on limiting the supply of small arms and light weapons and their munitions to conflict situations.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam, for having organized this meeting on

security sector reform (SSR). I also thank Mr. Titov, Ms. Bangura and Ms. Nakamitsu for their briefings.

I shall limit myself to making three observations. First, as many speakers before me have said, SSR is more of a political exercise than a technical one. It is decisive in post-crisis stabilization and consolidation, and requires significant work in the area of support to the host country. In post-conflict situations, security institutions must be established that are transparent, effective and fair and strive, within a system of good governance, to uphold democratic principles and human rights. Yet the national ownership of the host country, political will, ongoing and inclusive dialogue between those responsible for SSR, civil society and Governments are all essential if the process is to succeed.

The United Nations encounters difficulties when local authorities do not commit as firmly to SSR as called for in the relevant resolutions. We must never forget that, as I said, security sector reform is as much a political as a technical process. Its goals of rebuilding the national armed forces and internal security forces, as well as the judiciary and penal systems, are linked to the fundamental sovereign functioning of the State and the end game of reinstating a national system and a chain of command that restore security, belonging and confidence in the State by enshrining the protection of civilians and the upholding of human rights, all in line with fundamental democratic requirements.

This work is important in the context of the United Nations efforts to resolve disputes and establish lasting peace. It is often key to the exit strategies of peacekeeping or special political missions, as it allows for a transfer of operational responsibility for security to the host country. On the other hand, we know that incomplete or unsuccessful SSR can be a factor for tension or even relapse into violence. In undertaking these activities, United Nations missions need adequate resources adapted to every stage of a crisis. The Council tries to reflect that need in its approach to mandates. As we have just said, SSR is a delicate and often lengthy process. The United Nations has a role to play in improving the expertise of its missions and its access to local stakeholders. That, I believe, raises the question of the language spoken by the experts.

The United Nations can also enjoy close cooperation with other players on the ground, as in the case of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the European Union Training Mission in Mali. I stress that the adapted deployment of significant SSR resources is not always immediately necessary in peacekeeping operations. Such operations do not always need to play a direct operational role; instead, they may act as technical advisers, motivators and coordinators. Moreover, they cannot substitute for the role of local authorities, who must conduct a thorough analysis of needs and define the requirements of outside support.

Priorities and sequencing need therefore to be established. Among generally urgent measures, rehabilitating the police and gendarmerie services and restarting an integrated corrections chain of command are absolutely essential, as the Council noted in the Central African Republic. The Council can also identify certain priorities, as for example when it talks about the need for a rapid reaction military force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is for those reasons that France feels that peacekeeping efforts regarding SSR have to be sequenced and adapted to the phase of the crisis, as well as focused on several initial priorities that involve experts in sufficient numbers and qualifications, adjusted to the needs and capacities of the host country, in close cooperation with the numerous international actors, including the European Union, bilateral partners and other donors.

By way of conclusion, the Council must have at its disposal precise elements regarding the implementation of SSR programmes. In resolution 2151 (2014), we called for such coordination and for an increased role for the Council. Unfortunately, the Security Council is not always regularly or sufficiently well informed of progress in that field. I therefore reiterate our call for the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General to provide better details on those processes during their various briefings to the Council or in meetings of the Council with troop- and police- contributing countries. They must insist on an implementation strategy and, if necessary, on its linkage with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures by ensuring the effective of coordination with other United Nations organs and agencies, or even on the potential difficulties that they might encounter with the authorities of the host country. In that way, the Council should have at its disposal a regular analysis of results and improvements to be made. Successful SSR is a factor for stability and development for concerned countries, and thus a guarantee of success for the United Nations.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Nigeria.

First, I want to thank our briefers: Assistant Secretary-General Titov, Assistant Secretary-General Nakamitsu and Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bangura for their very comprehensive briefings. I must acknowledge that we have all been greatly enriched by their perspectives on our very important discussion this morning.

Our meeting today offers the Council an opportunity to advance the enduring discourse on security sector reform (SSR) and to explore ways of giving practical and effective application to resolution 2151 (2014), which provides a clear and common basis of guidance for United Nations support to SSR. We believe that the implementation ofthe resolution would benefit from a prioritized plan of action that could form the basis of periodic reports of the Secretary-General. That, in our view, would allow the Council to monitor progress in the implementation of the resolution. We are pleased to note that there has been a steady increase in the demand for SSR. Today, as we speak, the number of Security Council resolutions that reference SSR stands at 37. SSR has become more integral to peacekeeping with a significant number of peacekeeping operations supporting the reform of security institutions.

The Security Sector Reform Unit of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, whose Assistant Secretary-General we have just listened to this morning, has been instrumental in the effort to mainstream SSR. We want to commend the unit for that important achievement. We also welcome the work of the Office of Special Representative Bangura and the Team of Experts in providing support to national authorities, including in SSR processes. Indeed, the United Nations Development Programme must also be recognized, particularly as the co-chair of the United Nations inter-agency Task Force on Security Sector Reform, and its valuable contribution to advancing both the rule of law and SSR.

The modest experience acquired so far indicates that the quality and impact of United Nations support to SSR depends on its coherence and effective coordination within the United Nations and between the United Nations and other stakeholders supporting SSR processes. With the multiplicity of actors supporting SSR in situations where national capacity for coordination is often limited, it is imperative to establish clarity of rules and division of labour among those involved in the reform process.

That is why we encourage the concept of an SSR compact among peace operations, international partners and the host State, as espoused by Mr. Titov. Such a compact would foster predictability, prevent duplication and ensure mutual accountability and transparency in the implementation of the United Nations mandate. It would also strengthen the effectiveness of United Nations assistance by setting out focused and time-bound priorities, as well as provide an enabling framework for partnership between international partners and host Governments. In clarifying roles, it is important to emphasize that States — as most speakers have noted this morning — bear the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security within their borders. States must continue to take the lead in determining their own security sector priorities. That is the essence and primacy of the idea of national ownership.

The global normative frameworks on SSR expounded by the United Nations must be placed within the specificity of the sociopolitical realities of the particular country that is undergoing reform. In that regard, the SSR policy framework of the African Union, adopted only in 2013, aptly addresses the complicity of the relationship between the former security institutions of the State, on the one hand, and the resilience of traditional and often informal customary African security institutions, on the other. The future viability of SSR in Africa will depend to a large extent on how effectively we are able to balance the relationship between the statutory formality and customary informality of security institutions in Africa.

National efforts at ensuring security must take into consideration regional and global threats to security. That is more poignant in the current global environment, where transnational threats increasingly emanate essentially from non-State actors. In specific terms, the link between national SSR processes and various regional and global initiatives must be emphasized at this point. The adoption of the African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform provides opportunities for increasing cooperation with the United Nations and other regional organizations. In turn, the adoption of an Economic Community of West African States SSR policy framework would complement that process at the subregional level.

Several speakers before me this morning have emphasized the need to remain cognizant of the

preventive dimension of security sector governance and how that could promote peacebuilding.

I would like to say that Nigeria encourages continued engagement with SSR on the part of other United Nations organs, notably the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. We welcome the attention the General Assembly accords to SSR-related issues, especially under goal 16 of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. That underscores the important link between security and development. It is our collective responsibility not only to guard, guide and protect that nexus; we must cultivate their symbiotic relationship as well.

It is gratifying to note that considerable progress has been achieved in taking the SSR agenda forward. But we believe that much more can and indeed must be done to support SSR processes. In resolution 2151 (2014), we already have a platform for action. What is needed now is for all hands to be on deck at the global, regional and national levels. Only a collective, collaborative and concerted effort will ensure our success in this important endeavour.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7509

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7509th meeting

Friday, 21 August 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Casimiro
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Stehelin
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Ms. Darlow
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Thomas
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 5 August 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/598)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-26132 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 5 August 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/598)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of the Israel, Italy and Lebanon to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2015/652, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Italy, Jordan, Lithuania, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/598, which contains the text of a letter dated 5 August 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Chad, Chile, China, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2236 (2015).

The meeting rose at 10.10 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7510

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7510th meeting
Friday, 21 August 2015, 10.10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Casimiro
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Stehelin
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Ms. Darlow
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Meek
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2015/579)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council. Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-26138 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2015/579)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Serbia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Zarif, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Pristina.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hashim Thaçi to participate in this meeting.

The Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/579, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zarif.

Mr. Zarif: The report before the Council details the activities of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) during the latest quarterly reporting period from 16 April to 15 July. Beyond simply presenting the report, I will also reflect briefly on the wider range of important achievements, as well as challenges, facing Kosovo at this time.

I would like to begin by commending the critically important step taken by the Kosovo institutions on the third of this month, when the Assembly of Kosovo passed the requisite constitutional amendment and the laws on the establishment of the specialist court and specialist prosecutor's office. These legislative acts fully accord with the exchange of letters between Kosovo and the European Union (EU) on the matter, which were endorsed by the Assembly in April 2014.

As reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/579), delays in finalizing the required framework had been the subject of serious concern from various quarters. However, the passage of necessary formative acts and their promulgation yesterday by President Jahjaga stand as a sign of Kosovo's increasing determination to meet its fundamental obligations and commitments, which imply full respect for the rule of law and impartial justice, as well as accountability and equality before the law.

The full establishment of the rule of law is facing other important challenges, which merit mention today. One of them is the legal protection of cultural and religious heritage sites. In June, the Appellate Panel of the Special Chamber of the Kosovo Supreme Court issued decisions that, in effect, set aside a landmark decision by the Trial Panel of the Special Chamber in December 2012. That decision concerned property within the special protective zone of the Visoki Dečani Orthodox Monastery. The 2012 decision rejected claims of ownership by two socially owned enterprises against the Visoki Dečani Monastery. The resolution of this outstanding dispute had been accepted by the two parties to the dispute and hailed by the international community. In contrast, the Appellate Panel's decision applied highly questionable legal reasoning in order to return the issue to a local court, which assuredly will reopen the dispute and potentially lead to serious new tensions surrounding that precious cultural and religious heritage site.

Respect for and the protection and preservation of the Serbian Orthodox cultural heritage in Kosovo are fundamental duties and represent tests of the responsibility of Kosovo's governing institutions. Should those fail, many other important functions and responsibilities may equally fall into question. It is therefore a matter of utmost importance that the legal framework of protection enshrined in the Constitution of Kosovo be adhered to with conscientious rigour. That includes but is not limited to the Assembly of Kosovo's future consideration of a comprehensive law on cultural heritage. I commend the firm assurances given to me by Prime Minister Isa Mustafa that a revised version

of the draft law will not be approved by the Cabinet and submitted to the Assembly unless it fully conforms with the relevant provisions of the Constitution.

The enormous strides already taken both by Pristina and Belgrade through the EU-facilitated dialogue demand continuing commitment on the part of the parties, and no less from the international community. On 25 August, the top leaders from each side will meet once again, seeking accord on issues where differences — while narrowed — still remain. Among those issues, setting forth a detailed framework for the establishment of the future association/community of Serb-majority municipalities is of paramount importance. Several other matters are now equally ripe for conclusion. Already, the implementation of the arrangements on mutual recognition of vehicular insurance, which began just this past week, is providing evidence of the benefits accruing from the normalization of relations.

It is important not to underestimate the potential of this historic process, begun under the tenure of EU High Representative Ashton and now in the capable hands of her successor, Federica Mogherini. Reaching equitable compromises that overcome legacies from the conflict and produce tangible benefit to both sides is not limited only to the terms of the First Agreement reached on 19 April 2013. During the coming days, it is my hope that dialogue will expand to include other difficult issues that continue to burden relations. Among those, I would highlight renewed effort to determine the fate of missing persons and to provide a scheme for compensating their families; to revitalize transportation and commercial links; to address the many complex issues surrounding property; to deal with issues of the return and settlement of refugees and internally displaced persons; and to discuss the status of the Orthodox Church.

As Council membes are already aware, this will be my last briefing to the Council in my capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Kosovo. I therefore hope that they will permit me a few brief reflections on the trends and processes I have witnessed. When I arrived in Kosovo soon after the events of July 2011, tension was extremely high on the ground. Road barricades had been erected throughout the north, and the international security presences had been forced into a strong preventive posture. Public political discourse among the communities in Kosovo, as well as between Belgrade and Priština, was adversarial and confrontational. Few, if any, conciliatory messages could be heard from any side.

Four years later, the situation differs dramatically. Kosovo Serb mayors — elected for the first time under a unified legal framework — now govern in all 10 Kosovo Serb-majority municipalities, including the four municipalities in the north. Kosovo Serb Ministers and Parliamentarians now serve actively in key positions of the central institutions, promoting the vital interests not only of their own community, but increasingly of the electorate as a whole. Police structures are fully integrated, and thereby more responsive. Significant progress has been made towards the integration of all components of the justice system. Through a process of committed dialogue and political compromise, the concrete needs and aspirations of people — perhaps for the first time since the conflict itself — register more loudly in the public discourse than do insinuations about the past.

No progress is irreversible, of course. I do not wish to suggest that the efforts made to date are yet sufficient to guarantee headway. I do, however, firmly believe that there is objective justification for cautious optimism that this process will continue and produce more tangible results in the interest of all.

It has been my privilege to serve during these past four years, and I will depart the Mission with strong confidence in the leadership I have observed on each side, as well as from the people. Their future is being built around a shared stake in creating the conditions for long term peace and prosperity.

I conclude my remarks today by expressing my deep gratitude to you, Madam President, and to all members of the Council for their support to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and me. Much has been achieved, and I am confident that the positive progress will only accelerate in the time ahead. The next period will bring not only further challenges but also, I am confident and certain, further progress, not least due to the Council's continuing support and engagement. UNMIK, my successor and the entire United Nations presence in Kosovo will remain committed to contributing to that end.

The President: I thank Mr. Zarif for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Dačić.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; English text provided by the delegation*): I am honoured

on this occasion to address the Security Council, convened to consider the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/579) on the work of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) from 16 April to 15 July 2015. I take this opportunity to thank the members of the Security Council for the attention they continue to accord the question of Kosovo and Metohija, which is of priority importance to the Republic of Serbia.

Through its proactive engagement and compromise-seeking approach, the Republic of Serbia has made every effort to contribute to the lasting peace, stability and prosperity of the Western Balkans. It is evident that substantive progress has been made in the region in the fields of peacebuilding and democratization. Exceptional results have been achieved in strengthening regional cooperation and in the process of European integration, to which the Republic of Serbia has made an important contribution. Yet, it is necessary for all countries of the region, as well as relevant international actors, to invest additional efforts in maintaining and promoting stability, all the more as it remains brittle and in view of the challenges that we continue to face.

An exceptionally important role in this context is played by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo and Metohija, and I shall repeat also on this occasion that a status-neutral and undiminished presence of UNMIK is of paramount importance to stability and the creation of conditions leading to a lasting and sustainable solution for the question of Kosovo and Metohija on the basis of resolution 1244 (1999). I therefore reiterate our strong opposition to any downsizing of the Mission and reduction of its activities. Serbia highly appreciates UNMIK's engagement towards creating the basic preconditions for the peaceful coexistence of the ethnic communities in the province, security and respect for the basic human and civil rights of all its inhabitants. Accordingly, we expect UNMIK to continue to implement its mandate under resolution 1244 (1999), particularly in the areas that are important to the survival and normal and dignified life of the Serbs and other non-Albanian communities.

We appreciate the contribution of other international organizations whose missions, carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, are constituent parts of international civil and military presences in the Serbian southern province, including as the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Mission in Kosovo. Bearing in mind that this is his last participation in a meeting of the Security Council on the work of UNMIK in his capacity of Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, I express my special gratitude to Mr. Farid Zarif for his efforts to implement the UNMIK mandate and to coordinate the international presences, notwithstanding the persistent challenges. I take this opportunity to wish him, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and in my own name, much success in his new mission.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia has confirmed in practical terms its full commitment to the dialogue conducted with the facilitation of the European Union. We expect its continuation to solidify the basis for the implementation of agreements already achieved. Serbia consistently meets all its obligations under the agreements reached thus far in the framework of the First Agreement on Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, initialled in Brussels in April 2013. I am pleased to note that the formation of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities has been singled out among the key issues in the context of the implementation of the Brussels Agreement and that, equally historic, the visit of Serbian Prime Minister Aleksander Vučić to Albania has been recognized as another clear indication of our commitment to and active engagement in the promotion of the stability and European integration of the region as a whole.

The continuation of the dialogue at a high political level provides the necessary political momentum to the quest for mutually acceptable responses to issues that burden the life of the people of the province and prevent the exercise of their basic rights. Serbia has approached the dialogue with Pristina with a genuine desire to find solutions that will allow all the inhabitants of the province to normalize their lives within the broader process of the integration of the region into the European Union. It is in this context that the participation of the Serbs in the political life of Kosovo and Metohija is also being evolved. Going forward, in addition to the aforementioned formation of the association/community of Serb majority municipalities, the key issues for Serbia in the dialogue with Pristina remain those of internally displaced persons and the position of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as property issues.

As I point out regularly at Security Council meetings on the work of UNMIK, the Republic of Serbia comports itself with full respect and appreciation for resolution 1244 (1999). I have repeatedly stressed the constructiveness of the Government of the Republic of Serbia vis-à-vis the participation of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Kosovo and Metohija in the work of regional forums without prejudging their status. Yet, we continue to be met with Pristina's efforts and requests to be included in the work of international organizations outside the context of the agreement on regional representation and cooperation, which are unacceptable to the Republic of Serbia. The latest such examples are Kosovo's attempts to become a member of UNESCO and INTERPOL.

As a territory administered by the United Nations under the valid and mandatory resolution 1244 (1999), Kosovo is not and cannot be considered a State subject to international law and cannot, ipso facto, qualify for admission to organizations such as those to which I have referred. In that sense, each and every different attitude to the consideration of the question of Kosovo's membership in these organizations would be tantamount to ignoring — that is, violating — the legal rules created under the auspices of the United Nations for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security. When and if such a time comes, these questions should become the subjects of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia attaches special importance to the quest for a solution to the problem of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and Metohija. Creating conditions for their sustainable return is one of the key elements of the process of reconciliation. It is with regret that I have also to note on this occasion that, even 16 years after the end of the conflict and notwithstanding the years-long presence of the international community, no conditions exist in Kosovo and Metohija for the unhindered and sustainable return of internally displaced persons, as is also noted in regular reports of the Secretary-General on the work of UNMIK and in reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

To correctly illustrate my contention and to help explain the magnitude of the obstacles that still hinder the return of displaced persons to Kosovo and Metohija, let me remind the Council of the data according to which an average of 25 per cent of refugees and displaced persons in the world return home upon the end of conflicts. According to the statistics, the minimum is 12 per cent, while the maximum can amount even to more than 50 per cent. Out of the more than 220,000 persons who left Kosovo and Metohija since 1999, only 1.9 per cent achieved sustainable return in the past 16 years, while about 204,000 persons continue to be displaced in Serbia. Accordingly, the percentage of sustainable returns in this concrete case is below all world standards and averages. The most recent report on UNMIK bears out the continuity of the descending trend of returns, while Serbia continues to top the list of European countries by the number of internally displaced in protracted displacement. I simply wanted to familiarize the Security Council with that data, as the Council has jurisdiction over such issues. How can it be acceptable for any country that 1.9 per cent of displaced persons have been able to return? The Council meets daily to discuss various regions. It cannot remain silent in the face of the fact that only 1.9 per cent of the displaced have returned to Kosovo over the past 16 years. Perhaps it is the case that, when it comes to Serbia and Serbs, everything is accepted and allowed.

The necessary conditions for return include appropriate security guarantees as well such conditions as the freedom of movement, an effective mechanism for the restitution of property and other appurtenant rights, protection against discrimination, guaranteed access to institutions of the system, documents and justice and support to returnees to regain economic independence. What is also necessary is to prevent the obstruction of returns, along with full respect for the principle of the responsibility of international and local actors engaged in the process.

I therefore call on the United Nations and other representatives of the international Administration in Kosovo to help overcome problems that make the return of internally displaced persons even more difficult and aggravate their already distressing situation, which is replete with constant security incidents, including personal attacks and attacks on property. The situation is further exacerbated by the climate of impunity for crimes committed against Serbs — a reflection of the fact that no legally valid sentence has yet been pronounced against a single perpetrator of any of the more than 1,000 killings of Serbs committed since 1999.

The majority of attacks in the reporting period were aimed at the property of returnees and at returnees themselves in the localities of Klina, Peć

and Goraždevac, as well as at religious sites. Also, an explosive device was discovered in the vicinity of the Holy Trinity Monastery at Mušutište, in the municipality of Suva Reka. The incident occurred immediately before a visit of about 100 internally displaced Serbs who intended to mark a religious feast on the ruins of the Monastery.

Proper records on ethnically motivated incidents are still non-existent, just as is proper intervention by the competent authorities of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. That is yet another indication of how much effort and will still need to be invested in beginning serious and genuine work on reconciliation and in ensuring a proper approach to the problem. In that regard, promises do not suffice; what is needed instead are concrete results so that a clear message is sent to those who obstruct the survival and return of Serbs to Kosovo and Metohija that such activities, harmful to the process of reconciliation, will not be tolerated, and to Serbs and other non-Albanians that they may return and exercise their human rights and freedoms freely and without apprehension. If that is not possible, then the Security Council should send a message to all the Serbs expelled from Kosovo that it has not been able to ensure their safe return. I think that is only fair and just to the Serbian people, given that many countries represented in the Security Council have demonstrated their willingness to participate in the reconciliation process in the region. Perhaps by such an example the Council could show whether or not it has the will to guarantee and safeguard Serb returns. Again, I would reiterate that 200,000 Serbs were expelled and nothing has been done. I believe Serbs deserve a response, even if it is negative.

As I did in my last statement to this body (see S/PV.7448), it is with concern that I again warn that the desecration of Serbian monasteries is continuing. That is a way of intimidating the remaining Orthodox population in the province. The latest example was the attack on the Orthodox Church of Saint Petka in the returnee village of Drsnik.

One of the characteristics of the Serbian heritage in Kosovo and Metohija is its connection to living history. Its existence testifies to the ages-long presence of the Serbian people in Kosovo and Metohija. On this occasion, I would also like to point to the drastic discrepancy between the verbal pronouncements and real attitude of Pristina to the question of the protection of Serbian cultural heritage. Practical examples are the best proof of this. Since June 1999, 236 churches, monasteries and other sites owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as cultural-historical monuments, have been targets of attacks. As many as 61 of them have the status of cultural monuments, while 18 are of exceptional importance for Serbia. And four of them have World Heritage Site status and are under the protection of UNESCO. Let me mention just a few: the Church of the Virgin Hodegetria, from 1315; the Church of Saint Nicholas, from 1331; the Church of Saint Saviour, from 1348; and the Monastery and Hermitage of Saint Peter Koriski, from the beginning of the thirteenth century. One hundred and seventy-four religious sites and 33 cultural-historical monuments have been pillaged or destroyed in Kosovo and Metohija, while more than 10,000 icons and other ecclesiastical artistic and liturgical items have been stolen. Five thousand two hundred and sixty-one tombstones on 256 Serbian Orthodox graveyards have been destroyed or damaged, and not a single intact tombstone stands on more than 50 of the graveyards. Therefore, it is not only live Serbs who are the targets of attacks, but also the dead.

That was testified to by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who said in a statement at the scene of one such attack that the deliberate targeting of religious sites, such as churches, cemeteries and monasteries, was shameful and inexcusable. The attacks on Serbian heritage are in that sense tantamount to attacks on the identity of the Serbs, and affect directly their feeling of acceptance in local communities. As part and parcel of attempts to alter historical facts, they are aimed at marginalizing and eliminating the presence of Serbs and Serbia in the history of Kosovo and Metohija.

That is evinced also by the draft law on cultural heritage that is in the process of being adopted in the Kosovo Parliament and that denies the private ownership of churches and monasteries to the Serbian Orthodox Church and provides that they, as well as all other heritage in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, are the cultural heritage owned by the "State of Kosovo".

Members will agree with me that those who aspire to UNESCO membership should confirm, not only in words, but also in deeds, the commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Constitution of UNESCO, the provisions of which are poles apart from the deliberate, systematic vandalizing of cultural and historic monuments of their fellow citizens aimed at removing the traces of the ages-long existence of a

people in a territory, as well as the failure to punish the perpetrators of these acts of vandalism unworthy of the twenty-first century. Attached to my statement are images of the destruction and a map of Serbian cultural heritage and monuments in Kosovo. Unfortunately, the majority of them have been devastated and destroyed. The images show those monasteries and churches before their demolition and the way they look today. There are also television broadcasts and videos that show the devastation of Serbian monasteries. The membership of UNESCO cannot condemn the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) for ruining and demolishing its cultural heritage while simultaneously rewarding those who are doing the same thing elsewhere. There is a monastery in Dečani that is under the protection of UNESCO. The pictures I have provided show what has been written on the walls of that monastery, which is also under the protection of international forces, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) and the International Security Force in Kosovo (KFOR). Written in Arabic, under the name of ISIL, it says that the caliphate is on its way.

We condemn each and every act of desecration of the religious sites of any and all faiths. However, while ISIL's desecration and destruction of the cultural and religious heritage in the Middle East is met with a worldwide outcry and condemned as terrorism, the candidate for UNESCO membership who desecrates and destroys Serbia's cultural heritage in Kosovo and Metohija receives a pat on the shoulders as their reward. That is absolutely unacceptable to the Republic of Serbia. After all, resolution 1244 (1999) remains the only valid legal framework regulating the question of Kosovo and Metohija. If that were not the case, why would we be convening today's meeting? If resolution 1244 (1999) is no longer valid, why are we meeting? If displaced Serbs cannot freely and safely visit religious sites and celebrate religious holidays in a dignified manner, then the calls and encouragement of the Kosovo institutions to displaced Serbs to return are highly dubious, as is their ability to provide safety and security to all in Kosovo, particularly at the local level.

I recall that we have been discussing those issues in Brussels, but what kind of discussion is possible when there is no mention of the fact that Kosovo is seeking membership in UNESCO and INTERPOL? The property of the Orthodox Serbian Church is on the agenda in Brussels, but behind our backs they are trying to bypass the Security Council and resolution 1244 (1999) and to request such membership. Those who granted those sites World Heritage status are the same countries represented here today that are also members of UNESCO.

I believe that the creation of conditions for the Serbian and other non-Albanian populations to enjoy basic human rights without discrimination would contribute to the improvement of the overall atmosphere for the return of internally displaced persons. Furthermore, we take this opportunity to express our regret at the closure, without consultation with the Republic of Serbia, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Pristina, which was headed by the representative of a friendly country, Jordan. Taken allegedly for financial reasons, that decision was far from justified by the human rights situation in Kosovo and Metohija. How is it possible to justify such a decision at a time when those tasked with addressing human rights in Belgrade are being offered extended resources while the same capacities in Pristina are simultaneously downsized? I urge members and Jordan to ask the High Commissioner for Human Rights how that can be justified.

As a sponsor of resolution 2178 (2014), the Republic of Serbia has taken all possible measures to suppress the financing and organizing of terrorism and the ever more widespread phenomenon of recruitment of foreign fighters who join armed terrorist organizations in the Middle East, such as the Islamic State. We expect the international missions in Kosovo and everyone else, as well as the local Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG), to contribute, to the best of their abilities, to that important global struggle.

In the context of the priority that the Government of the Republic of Serbia attaches to the solution of property issues in Kosovo and Metohija, I would like to draw attention to the privatization processes being conducted by the Privatization Agency of Kosovo. UNMIK also determined that the process contravenes resolution 1244 (1999), since that Agency was not established under the laws in force in Kosovo and Metohija under the resolution. In that regard, it is evident that public and socially owned companies are being privatized in Serb-majority communities, leading us to conclude that the basic motivation of such privatizations, whose ethnic connotation is all too transparent, is precisely the destruction of economic resources in Serbian communities, which is incompatible with democratic achievements and European standards.

We all are well aware of the importance of respect for ownership rights, whether of private or public property. The cancellation of the sale and the liquidation of companies that are essential to the economic development of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija affect the key criteria for creating the conditions for a sustainable return. In that sense, it is necessary to ensure that all activities related to privatization in Kosovo and Metohija be restored to the valid legal frameworks.

We are deeply concerned that the draft law on the Kosovo Property Comparison and Verification Agency under consideration by the Parliament of Kosovo directly contravenes the 2011 technical agreement on cadastre records. The draft law would establish conditions for the legalization of property unlawfully expropriated from Serbs, which would do enormous and irreparable damage to the Serbian community in the province. With precisely that in mind, we have requested that the procedure for the adoption of the draft law be halted and that implementation begin on the technical agreement on cadastre records, which provides for the establishment of a body consisting of representatives of Belgrade, Pristina and the European Union that would conduct a comparison of cadastral records.

The current situation in the province bears out our assessment that conditions have not been met for the transfer of competencies in the rule of law sector to the provincial PISG. The fact that those competencies have been entrusted to EULEX does not diminish the authority and responsibility of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. I expect that, within its powers, EULEX will continue to fulfil its executive competencies in the rule of law sector, bearing in mind a realistic appraisal of the situation in Kosovo in that area.

Serbia has stressed on a number of occasions the need for continual monitoring and for ensuring objective criteria for appraising the work of the provincial institutions by the relevant missions deployed in Kosovo and Metohija under the auspices of the United Nations. In its *Kosovo 2014 Progress Report*, the European Commission notes that much remains to be done with regard to the functioning and accountability of the judiciary in Kosovo and Metohija. Likewise, strong concerns are also expressed in the European Parliament's March 2015 resolution 2015/413 on the European integration process of Kosovo with respect to the independence, accountability, impartiality and efficiency of judges and prosecutors and the overall performance of the rule of law sector. The resolution goes on to say that the implementation of legislation on the protection of ethnic minorities and their cultural rights remains a challenge in Kosovo and underscores the ongoing need for serious efforts with regard to adopting legislation in order to include provisions on the right of ethnic minorities with a view to preventing their direct and indirect discrimination.

I share the concern expressed in the report before us about the capacity of the Kosovo judiciary to handle socially sensitive issues. Highly illustrative in that context is the case related to the ownership rights to land within and outside the Visoki Dečani monastery, as mentioned in the report. At the same time, it provides telling evidence of the attitude of the PISG in Kosovo towards the Serbian cultural and Christian heritage, which on countless occasions has been the target of orchestrated vandal attacks of destruction, pillage, burning and desecration. None of the perpetrators of those heinous acts, unbefitting the Europe of the twenty-first century, has been properly tried in court. What we are faced with now are somewhat different but more perfidious methods. The goal, though, remains the same: to erase the traces of the centuries-long existence of the Serbs and Serbia in Kosovo and Metohija.

The new methodology is evidenced by the case of the property of the Dečani monastery, a jewel of not only the Serbian but also the European and world cultural heritage, which, alongside with Gracanica, the Church of Our Lady of Ljeviš and the Patriarchate of Peć, has been included on the UNESCO List of World Heritage in Danger.

The decision of the Appellate Panel of the Special Chamber of the Kosovo Supreme Court that — notwithstanding the dissent of two international judges on the Panel — set aside the judgement rendered in 2012 in favour of the Dečani monastery by a mixed Trial Panel presided over by a EULEX judge, is an attack on the Dečani monastic fraternity, given that agricultural land is of key importance to the monastery's ability to be self-sustaining and that its security is at stake.

Bearing all of this in mind, it was with concern that we received information that EULEX was preparing to transfer the cases and the accompanying documentation processed by EULEX prosecutors and judges to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, that

is, the local judiciary. About 500 cases are involved, about 300 of them related to war crimes, of which 270 have been taken over from UNMIK. The Government of the Republic of Serbia expresses its concern at the intention to transfer the cases related to war crimes in the territory of Kosovo to the local judiciary, since all of them fall under the exclusive competence of EULEX, even after the amendment of the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government regulations on the mandate of the EU Mission relating to the rule of law in the province.

In fact, it is provided that EULEX prosecutors should continue to process the cases in respect of which they decided to launch an investigation prior to 15 April 2014, as well as the cases allocated to EULEX prosecutors before this date, which include cases of war crimes that EULEX took over from the UNMIK judiciary. If EULEX does proceed to transfer the cases to the institutions in Pristina, in particular the sensitive cases relating to the investigation of the war crimes committed in the territory of Kosovo, the consequences of the processing of the war crimes committed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) against Serbs, non-Albanians and Albanians, labelled "Serbian collaborators" during the armed conflicts of 1998 and 1999, would be unforeseeable.

Let me point out that, since it is expected that a specialist court will soon be established to adjudicate the war crimes committed by the KLA in the territory of Kosovo and Metohija, and since that court is being established precisely because of the incapacity of the local Kosovo judiciary to investigate and try the perpetrators of war crimes from the ranks of the KLA, the transfer of war crimes cases to the local judiciary by EULEX runs counter to the activities of the international community aimed at establishing the specialist court.

There is reason to believe that, if said cases were to be transferred to the local judiciary, much of the material evidence would disappear and many witnesses would be intimidated, which would make the work of the future specialist court for war crimes much more difficult.

Politically motivated arrests and lengthy trials, as well as the different metrics of the local judiciary, should not be disregarded either. One example I cited at previous meetings of the Security Council is the case of Oliver Ivanović, the leader of the Citizens' Initiative Serbia, Democracy, Justice, who was detained at the end of January 2014 and remains in detention despite the guarantees and the calls made by the Government of Serbia that he be granted bail. In an effort to be accorded this right, Oliver Ivanović has been on a hunger strike for days now.

Serbia is committed to the process of reconciliation. In that context, it is crucially important to ascertain the fate of missing persons. To that end, Serbian experts and expert teams are cooperating with UNMIK and EULEX and with the competent agencies in Kosovo.

The process of mutual reconciliation cannot be completed without trying in court the former members of the KLA suspected of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the persecution of Serbs, Roma and other non-Albanians, as well as their political adversaries among Kosovo and Metohija Albanians.

We attach special importance to trying the cases that are based on the findings of the Special Investigative Task Force of the European Union, set up to conduct an investigation of the inhumane treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs in Kosovo.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my conviction that a lasting and sustainable solution to the question of Kosovo and Metohija can be reached only through dialogue, with full respect for the legitimate interests of the entire population of Kosovo and Metohija, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), in the context of which we are working with dedication and commitment. In our efforts to achieve such a solution, it is necessary to bring about mutual reconciliation. This will certainly be helped by the adoption by our region of European standards and values on its path to the European Union. We expect the European Union to continue to facilitate our dialogue with Pristina. There is no doubt that the Government of the Republic of Serbia will continue its active engagement in the implementation of the Brussels agreements, in the interest of peace, stability and the economic development of the region.

I call on all actors to address this issue without any double standards. We cannot expect Serbia, which holds the chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and is making every effort in that respect, to guard the territorial integrity of Ukraine but not to use the same zeal when protecting the territorial integrity of its own country. I believe that this world still functions on the basis of principles,

not according to who is closer or on better terms with whom. I am for dialogue, but we are against unilateral moves and actions. We have seen examples of this first-hand, not in cases relating to Serbia but in others where double standards have been applied.

As the Council is aware, I was born in Kosovo and Metohija 49 years ago, in the city of Prizren, which in the fourteenth century was the capital of Serbia proper. Today only 22 Serbs live in Prizren. That is a historical reality and fact. Today in Kosovo the majority of the population — 60 per cent — is Albanian. Hashim Thaçi, in earlier statements before the Council, has said that everyone supports this except for the Serbian Orthodox population. This is the first step in admitting to ethnic cleansing, because how can one say that with only 4 per cent of the population of Kosovo being Serbs, there has been no ethnic cleansing?

I would ask the members of the Security Council, leading figures in the United Nations, not to apply any double standards in the case of Serbia but to bring to bear the same zeal and the same principles that they have applied to other countries and peoples, and to take into consideration the historical and cultural heritage of the Serbs in this region. Serbs have extended the hand of reconciliation, which remains outstretched. But we did not raise both hands as a sign of surrender. We will fight for our interests through political and diplomatic means. What members see as being in the best interests of their countries is what they should ask of Serbia; we request that they please not ask us to apply double standards. We will see what the result of the voting in UNESCO is; we will probably see very different attitudes and positions with regard to the admittance of Kosovo to UNESCO. I think that we should stop working under the table and be open. We should be very frank as to whether resolution 1244 (1999) is still valid or whether Pristina believes that UNMIK should leave Kosovo.

If that is simply a waste of time, then we should put an end to it. We cannot participate in such matters if there are hidden attempts to find a back door for the admittance of Kosovo to UNESCO and other United Nations bodies and specialized agencies. That should be a topic of frank and transparent talks. If the Council determines that resolution 1244 (1999) is no longer in effect, it should kindly clarify that intention.

The President: I thank Mr. Dačić for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Thaçi.

Mr. Thaçi (*spoke in Albanian; English text provided by the delegation*): I am very pleased to report today on the latest progress achieved in Kosovo, a new country now recognized by a majority of Member States.

At the outset, allow me to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zarif, for his work in Kosovo. He represented the United Nations in the course of the new situation in Kosovo following the declaration of independence of the Republic of Kosovo, the International Court of Justice opinion on the declaration's legality and on General Assembly resolution 64/298 of September 2010, which definitively closed the issue of the status of Kosovo by starting European Union-facilitated talks on the normalization of relations between the State of Kosovo and Serbia. As the same time, I would also like to welcome Mr Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan to his leadership of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Afghanistan was one of the first countries in the world to recognize the independence of Kosovo.

In recent months, Kosovo has faced some of the most difficult challenges of the past few years. However, as the Council is aware, those challenges have also provided Kosovo with opportunities to demonstrate its transformation from an importer of security resources to an exporter of stability and peace initiatives in the region. I wish to inform the Council that the Parliament of the Republic of Kosovo has now voted to amend the country's Constitution to create a specialist court that will adjudicate the alleged crimes cited in the report of the Council of Europe. The vote in our Parliament was overwhelmingly positive and consensual. As Deputy Prime Minister and the President of Parliament's largest party, I worked with my colleagues to convince fellow members and the greater public to establish this unusual legal instrument so that trials can be conducted in a credible, independent and internationally managed fashion.

It has been 17 years since the war in Kosovo began in 1998. Our resistance was a true case of David versus Goliath. I reaffirm that no Kosovar, myself included, will stand idly by and allow our specialist court to equate the genocidal acts of Slobodan Milošević and the State of Serbia with the later acts of desperate individuals from the community of the oppressed, committed during or after the war. Serbia's war against Kosovo was conducted with the involvement of the army, police and paramilitary units, and backed by Serbian intellectuals. It was a war of fascism, pure and

simple. We in Kosovo will not allow our history to be rewritten to blur the differences between hunter and prey. We will protect the legacy of our war — Kosovo's freedom and independence. Kosovo has now established an instrument that is far more credible than those used in trials of the courts in other Balkan countries.

We wish to thank those individual Member States that have noted and welcomed Kosovo's initiative, and I hope that the Security Council will also recognize the mature efforts of the Kosovo Government to deal with all crimes committed in the years of conflict. I also wish to invite European Union member countries to sign, without delay or prevarication, the Stabilization and Association Agreement in September. Any political delay in the signing of the Agreement or that on visa liberalization will be a strong setback to the dialogue process in Brussels.

As recently featured in the media, several Kosovar and international artists organized an event, the Thinking of You art exhibition and installation, to pay homage to the women raped by Serbian forces during the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo. The World Health Organization has concluded that 20,000 women — I repeat, 20,000 Albanian women — were raped and assaulted by the forces of the Serbian State during the war in Kosovo in 1998 and 1999. Fifteen years after the war, sadly, the tragedy of the rape of these women as a war crime in Kosovo has not been addressed by the mechanisms of international justice — neither by the United Nations nor by the Council of Europe.

The time has now come for international justice for the Kosovar women who were victims of a genocidal crime committed directly by the Serbian State. I therefore call on all members of the Security Council to support the petition signed by more than 150,000 citizens of Kosovo — all the people of Kosovo — seeking international justice for the Kosovar women raped by Serbians during the war. International humanitarian law, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and United Nations resolutions on that matter clearly state that issues of sexual violence in conflict cannot remain unrecognized and unpunished. Kosovo calls for justice.

Last winter, a huge number of Kosovars left Kosovo to seek asylum in European Union member countries. I am happy to report that we took strong measures to significantly lower the numbers of emigrating Kosovars. While the number of Kosovars claiming asylum in Germany reached 11,147 in March, by June the number had fallen to 1,373 and in July the number was in the hundreds and no longer in the thousands. Similarly, while the number of Kosovar asylum seekers in Hungary reached 14,000 in March, in June the number was below 300.

Our efforts to inform the Kosovo people were aided by European police forces that started monitoring the Serbian border with Hungary, where the illegal flow of immigrants was most rampant. Kosovo may have stemmed our numbers, but we are concerned about the fate of tens of thousands of Syrians who have left their country in the most tragic of circumstances. Kosovo is a country in which almost half of the population has experience as a refugee, and we sympathize with the plight of those who are seeking freedom and now filling the roads of our countries in search of it.

Part of our success to curtail the flow of asylum-seekers leaving Kosovo was due to some good news on the economic front. A French consortium won the bid to build a €400-million ski resort in Brezovica, which will greatly aid the resident Serbian community and bring fresh investments to Kosovo as a whole. We have also agreed to investments in our energy system, and with the help of the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development, we are completing a transaction for over €1 billion in new power generation that will create employment and exports from Kosovo. That project was started many years ago, but as complex negotiations draw to a close it will become a pillar of a new stage of economic development.

Today, Kosovo is the country with the highest average economic growth in the Western Balkans in the past seven years, and with the lowest debt-to-gross domestic product ratio in all of Eastern Europe. Yet while continuing to face enormous challenges, we are bravely seeking to translate our political freedom into greater economic opportunity for all the people of Kosovo.

Allow me to highlight the other key development that the Council has heard about today. Kosovo has applied for membership of UNESCO. We initially requested that New York transfer our application to UNESCO as the UNESCO secretariat had initially advised, but we understand that the United Nations does not want to play a role in exchanging correspondence and has left it to the UNESCO States members to decide the merits of Kosovo's membership. We have heard several questions posed here today. Allow me to answer a few of them.

Is Kosovo eligible to become a UNESCO member before becoming a United Nations Member? The answer is a resounding yes — Kosovo is eligible to become a UNESCO member before becoming a United Nations Member State, provided that it exerts its maximum effort to secure a two-thirds majority of the votes in the General Conference. The voting takes place upon the recommendation of the Executive Board. We will learn of the final outcome of the vote in November. Many countries, from Austria to Viet Nam, became members of UNESCO long before they joined the United Nations.

The second question is: Would Kosovo's membership of UNESCO endanger the ongoing dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia on the normalization of relations? Kosovo is already a member of two United Nations specialized agencies: the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. UNESCO would therefore not be the first agency or organization that Kosovo has joined since the initiation of the technical dialogue with Serbia in March 2011. Despite Serbia's claims, Kosovo's membership of international bodies will only advance stability and strengthen the dialogue for normalization. The continued isolation of Kosovo will certainly not promote normalization between Kosovo and Serbia. Beyond that, Serbia's attempt to block Kosovo's membership is completely at odds with the agreement signed in Brussels in April by Kosovo and Serbia, as represented by Mr. Dačić and myself.

Thirdly, I must answer the question about the safety of the UNESCO World Heritage sites in Kosovo. I can confirm in all conviction that they are safe — indeed, safer than they have been at any time in the past 1,000 years. They are protected by a very consolidated and modern legal framework approved by United Nations Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari, endorsed by the Secretary-General and adopted by the Kosovo Parliament. Our local police authorities protect 95 per cent of the sites of the Serbian Orthodox Church. NATO forces have entrusted us and are satisfied with the safety of the sites. Thousands of tourists, from Japan to Rwanda, are visiting the sites today and they provide good income for the people of Kosovo. I invite Council members to visit Kosovo as soon as possible to witness, themselves, the positive and safe situation. Our Government has also engaged in interfaith dialogue, which the Secretary-General has characterized in several of his reports as a positive contribution to reconciliation.

I address the issues related to our UNESCO bid at length because we are gravely concerned over Serbia's methods as it seeks to deny our membership and keep us isolated from opportunities in education, science and culture. Serbia's ambassador to UNESCO, Darko Tanasković, was recently interviewed by a Russian radio station, where he called for a "wider Christian front" against Kosovo's membership. That language completely inappropriately calls for clashes between faiths and has clear racist undertones. The Kosovo war was not a religious conflict. It was a genocide committed by the State of Serbia against the people of Kosovo. It destroyed lives in three countries and led to three different armed conflicts, as well as to the genocides in Croatia, Srebrenica and Kosovo that were directly committed by the State of Serbia.

We expect to have a clash of arguments with Serbia on the merits of our membership, but we refuse to engage in a lowly and unacceptable discourse that promotes discord between religions and increases religious intolerance. We call on all members of the Security Council to support Kosovo's bid to UNESCO membership. Council members can do so even without having yet recognized Kosovo. We will also seek and are working intensively towards and deserve membership of INTERPOL and the Council of Europe, two vital tools to promote and protect human rights and human lives.

I have heard some harsh words on the part of Minister Dačić today. I understand that he is taking part in an election campaign in his country and may therefore need to use nationalist language, but the dialogue with Serbia has continued and is continuing to ensure the normalization of relations in the context of the European integration process.

Next week, Kosovo and Serbia will again meet in Brussels and I hope that we will agree to conclude a package of important agreements. The first agreement, regarding telecommunications, will ensure that Kosovo obtains an independent international dialing code, which will save millions of euros as we currently use Monegasque, Serbian and Slovenian codes. The second agreement, on energy, is meant to definitively stop the parallel distribution system in northern Kosovo that was set up by Serbia. Kosovo law will now prevail in creating a competitive distribution market in the entire territory of Kosovo and taxes to Kosovar authorities will be finally paid. The third deal will ensure that a barricade constructed in the north, which is called a

"peace park", will no longer hamper the freedom of movement. The fourth deal is expected to establish the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities envisaged in the Ahtisaari plan. I assure the Council that the association will not have executive powers.

We have a highly decentralized municipal Government that will form the basis of our civic democracy. We hope to sign those deals next week so that the leaders of the Western Balkans can meet in Vienna for the next summit of our nations in the context of the Berlin Process. All leaders of the Western Balkans will meet and discuss practical forms of cooperation, either through joint infrastructure investments, youth-to-youth exchanges or the demarcation of borders. Kosovo will continue to play a role in several key processes, including the promotion, with Serbia, of a new highway that will link Serbia with the Albanian and Montenegrin coast via Kosovo highways. The so-called Pristina-Nis project will connect important parts of the Balkans. In the coming days, Kosovo will also sign a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro, which will soon become a NATO member. Kosovo will thereby complete demarcation of three quarters of its borders, the most of any country of the former Yugoslavia. No other republic has managed to resolve such painful challenges with its neighbours, as we have done.

The decision of the Russian Federation to allow Kosovar sportsmen to use Kosovar passports when travelling to Russia will also help improve the movement of Kosovars. Brazil also recently allowed all Kosovars to use their passports when travelling to Brazil. As Kosovo recently became an Olympic nation, that is a welcomed move in the lead-up to the Games in Rio de Janeiro. We hope our world judo champion, the Kosovar athlete Majlinda Kelmendi, will win our first gold medal there.

In conclusion, allow me to call on you, Mr. President, and members of the Council to recognize the progress achieved. Are there still problems in Kosovo? Yes, there are, as there are in each of the former Yugoslav republics in our region. But is Kosovo safe today? Yes, according to INTERPOL statistics, it is safer than 80 per cent of other European capitals. We are combating extremism, and we are a champion in the region in that regard. We are cooperating with the international community. We are part of an anti-corruption coalition. We are trying to build a prosperous democracy.

I know that still more needs to be done, but as someone who witnessed war for himself, members of the Council should be proud of themselves for the success in Kosovo. That is why the mandate of the next Special Representative of the Secretary-General should include serious discussions on how the Council can transfer the resources spent in calm Kosovo to the people in the Middle East and elsewhere, who today are facing the direst existential threats.

Kosovo is working on its aspirations to be a member of the European Union, NATO and the United Nations very soon.

Before I conclude my remarks, please allow me to respond to several issues that Mr. Dačić mentioned here. I would like an opportunity to reply to them before this organ.

Mr. Dačić began his election campaign today from the floor of the Security Council. I would like to remind him, however, that according to Kosovo itself and according to our relations, the issue of Kosovo is the eighth or ninth most important issue to the people of Kosovo. The most important issues for the people of Kosovo are terrorism, corruption, non-respect of minorities, the creation of a legal State and others.

Mr. Dačić mentioned that he was born in Kosovo. That is true. Kosovo, with its constitution that is in accordance with Martti Ahtisaari's document, offers dual citizenship, and I have offered dual citizenship to Mr. Dačić. He is welcome to take up that offer. He was born in Kosovo, but his family actually came to Kosovo as colonizers between the two World Wars.

I would also like to refer to the propagandistic brochure that was disseminated here in the Security Council. That is a desperate and unfortunate act. The crimes that were sponsored and committed by the State of Serbia happened in the global spotlight.

Not enough words suffice to express the crimes and genocide that Serbia committed throughout Kosovo, again citing the genocides in Croatia, Srebrenica and Kosovo. What Mr. Dačić is attempting to do today is again unfortunate and desperate. The images that he has brought here does not change the fact that Kosovo will continue to be a champion in the war on extremism and fundamentalism. He knows that his own intelligence services created the graffiti that he referred to. The intelligence services were installed as parallel

institutions in Kosovo and have been working against Kosovo using the old ways.

In Kosovo alone, the political and military machines of the State of Serbia have destroyed over 300 religious sites. Serbia burned half of Kosovo from 1998 to 1999. Serbia removed more than a million citizens of Kosovo from the country. Serbia committed ethnic cleansing and killed 15,000 people as the State of Serbia. Serbia has committed genocide. And more than that, it has destroyed lives. Serbia has killed women, the elderly, destroyed people's lives, raped women. Serbia committed genocide in Kosovo and it will be taken to suit for that issue. Once and for all, I must say Kosovo will not obtain Serbia's permission on any issue. It is now a sovereign country.

Albanians were always the majority in Kosovo. History cannot be rewritten by political and propagandist brochures and materials. The citizens of Kosovo can live in their homes and communities irrespective of their ethnicity — the Serbs, the Montenegrins all the other communities. I am one of the leaders who has continually worked in that direction. I have visited minority families and I have worked with minority Government officials for the past 16 years. Mr. Dačić must understand one thing: the Serbian army and police and the Serbian Administration will never return. His dream has ended once and for all. Serbia can continue the war. That is its practice. It is used to that. But Serbia will lose again.

The President: I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Meek (United Kingdom): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his final briefing. I am sure others will join me in paying tribute to all his hard work on Kosovo and his determination to improve the lives of all of Kosovo's citizens. We wish him every success in his new role. I also want to welcome Deputy Prime Ministers Dačić and Thaçi back to the Security Council again.

Let me start by reiterating our well-known position on the frequency of these meetings. We strongly believe the frequency should be reduced. Although many challenges remain, Kosovo's progress and its trajectory are undeniable. The reality, as described clearly in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/579), does not justify this level of the Council's attention. We also believe strongly that this meeting should not provide a platform to revisit nationalist positions that are unhelpful and not in keeping with the spirit of a dialogue. The report, although it shows that Kosovo faces significant challenges, also presents clear evidence of continuing steady progress. That is a welcome trend. The security situation remains generally stable, illegal migration is falling and we continue to see good practical cooperation at the local level, most notably in northern Kosovo.

The most important development since the Council last met to discuss Kosovo (see S/PV.7448) took place after the release of the Secretary-General's latest report: the positive vote on the specialist court. Although the delay on that issue was disappointing, we welcome that important step forward. Dealing with the past, no matter how difficult, controversial or painful, is vital if Kosovo is to tackle impunity and build respect for the rule of law. The vote in favour of the specialist court was also an important demonstration of Kosovo leaders' commitment to implement international agreements. That was a difficult decision that equired political courage, and we recognize the positive actions taken by Deputy Prime Minister Thaçi and Kosovo's Prime Minister and Speaker of Parliament to ensure that it passed. But more hard work will be needed before the court is established and operational. Sustained effort will be required to ensure accountability in the wake of the allegations in the Marty report. Comprehensive, robust witness-protection programmes must be a key part of that process if the court is to be effective. As a matter of urgency, we hope Kosovo's leaders will take the necessary steps and work with all partners to ensure that the court is established as soon as possible.

The Secretary-General's report also highlights some wider concerns about the rule of law. In particular, the Government of Kosovo must address the weaknesses of the Kosovo judiciary and improve its ability to handle sensitive cases. The report also makes clear the valuable role the Kosovo police plays in maintaining order and protecting all communities from violence. That is welcome, and we hope that the cooperation shown by the police and the Kosovo Serb community in Klina can be replicated elsewhere. The arrests of five people in connection with suspicious activity at Badovac reservoir highlights the need for continued vigilance, particularly regarding the threat posed by terrorism and returning foreign fighters.

Turning to the dialogue facilitated by the European Union, we welcome the continued engagement of both

sides. The dialogue process remains the most effective means of normalizing relations in the Western Balkans. It is vital to the future stability and prosperity of the region, and the surest way to preventing any return to the violence of the past. Both sides must demonstrate and deliver the benefits of the dialogue for all their citizens. The pace of the implementation of dialogue agreements should be increased, and it is vital that new agreements be reached, including on the association of Serb municipalities, at the next meeting later this month.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to remark on the very clear and welcome leadership shown by the President of Kosovo in addressing the legacy of sexual violence in conflict. It is important to bring the perpetrators of those despicable crimes to justice, whoever they are and wherever they live. My Prime Minister's special representative on the issue, Baroness Anelay, saw that first-hand during her visit to Kosovo in July, when she pledged further United Kingdom support for rehabilitation programmes for survivors. Taking action on sexual volence is another example of the willingness of Kosovo's leaders to confront the difficult issues of the past and secure a better future for all their citizens. I hope they will continue that approach in the coming months and in doing so take the necessary steps to also ensure progress on the specialist court and the dialogue.

Mr. Gasso Matoses (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the latest quarterly report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/579) on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), as well as to join my colleagues in taking this opportunity to express our gratitude to him for all his efforts over the past few years as Head of UNMIK, and to wish him all the best with his duties in future. I would also like to thank the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi for their statements.

During the previous debate on this subject, in May (see S/PV.7448), Spain expressed its support for a specialist court and called for its establishment as soon as possible. We would therefore like to congratulate those involved on passing the necessary legal amendments so that the court can be set up and undertake its functions. Now that that is in place, it is vital that the Kosovo authorities demonstrate that their commitment to the principles of accountability, the rule of law, reconciliation and peaceful coexistence for every community in Kosovo is a reality.

In that previous debate my delegation also expressed our concern about the violent events we had witnessed that same month, just before our meeting, and the possible negative effects they might have in Kosovo. In that regard, we noted with concern the details in the report at the time (S/2015/303) about the involvement of people with public responsibilities and representatives of political parties in ways that at the least supported the actions of others in those violent events. The authorities and political parties in Pristina must demonstrate by their actions that they have the political will to support peaceful coexistence between communities and an ongoing commitment to reconciliation and stability in the region.

We have noted with satisfaction the continuing dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the High Representative of the European Union, and the progress that has been made in recent months. However, it is essential that we continue to make further and more robust headway in implementing the agreements that have now been reached. In that regard, the Security Council has made specific and repeated calls for the effective establishment and launch of an association of Serb municipalities. That is critical, and Spain once again reiterates its call for that to be done.

Fulfilling that commitment is the cornerstone for assessing the seriousness and political will of the various stakeholders and the progress that has been made, all of which has an unquestionable reflection on the current security and stability situation in Kosovo. We welcome the information in the Secretary-General's most recent report on the fact that the situation is generally stable across the board. However, we are concerned about the fact that this claim contrasts with citations of a number of situations that make it clear that this stability is still fragile. In that context, we take a very positive view of the significant role that UNMIK still has to play, particularly through the concrete steps it has taken to promote peaceful coexistence and reconciliation in Kosovo. Spain therefore urges all the political actors involved to continue to collaborate and cooperate with UNMIK in that role.

I would like to conclude by reiterating that Spain will continue its constructive support without prejudice

to its position of principle, and we hope that Kosovo's regional and international stakeholders will do so too.

Mr. Méndez Graterol (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing and to recognize his efforts in carrying out his important responsibilities in the past few years. We congratulate Mr. Zahir Tanin on his appointment to replace Mr. Zarif and wish him every success in his new role. We also welcome the fact that at this meeting we are hearing directly from the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, and from Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to emphasize once again that the resolution 1244 (1999) is still the international judicial basis in force for achieving a solution within the context of the political negotiations on the future of Kosovo, conducted with respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Serbia. We reiterate our support for the implementation of the 19 April 2013 First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations between Belgrade and Pristina. We have always stressed the importance of the Brussels dialogue between Serbia and the local and provincial authorities in Kosovo in which both parties are working to arrive at a mutually agreed-on settlement. The results include the integration of the judiciary and civilian protection personnel, the creation of new administrative boundary line crossing points and the harmonization of vehicle insurance policies. Other key issues are the establishment of an association of Serb municipalities, the Interministerial Commission for Return and implementation of the strategic objectives outlined by the Minister for Communities and Return. In that regard, the return of Serb Kosovan citizens should be facilitated by ensuring an atmosphere of security, ethnic and religious tolerance and respect for their economic and property rights, as well as for their freedom of movement.

Promoting and respecting human rights in Kosovo requires the full implementation of the relevant international norms to prevent discrimination of minorities and displaced persons. Although the report of the Secretary-General (S/2015/579) refers to a slight decrease in incidents related to religious sites as compared the report of the previous quarter (S/2015/303), parties must work with determination to avoid situations of this kind, which have an impact on reconciliation among the different communities living in Kosovo.

Cooperation among local leaders, especially between the mayors of North and South Mitrovica, is a positive element in strengthening relations among the various communities. That serves to illustrate once again that citizens constitute a key element in generating trust, and we therefore welcome initiatives in the regard. The reconciliatiaon process also requires the continues work of the Working Group on Missing Persons, with a view to clarifying the fate of the thousands who went missing during the conflict.

We welcome the fact that the necessary measures have been adopted to set up the specialist court responsible for investigating accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity that were said to have been committed during the armed conflict in Kosovo. We hope that that court can be begin its work without any further delay. There can be no impunity for such crimes, and delivering justice is a positive step in achieving peace and reconciliation.

We note with satisfaction the efforts made with the support of the European Union as part of the second Rule of Law Compact, in order to resolve problems of accountability, corruption, crimes committed against ethnic groups, organized crime, gender discrimination, discrimination based on the grounds of ethnicity, developing a sytem for the protection of witnesses and pending claims regarding property.

The United Nations has played a fundamental role in Kosovo, especially through UNMIK by promoting security, stability and respect for human rights. That work has been complemented through the cooperation mechanism of the international security force in Kosovo and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo. We believe that each of those missions — based on their respective mandates — should continue to play a proactive, complementary role with a view to finding a sustainable, just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the question of Kosovo. For, as we have pointed out, direct dialogue among the parties is essential.

We believe that there must be support for the process of voluntary returns of Serbs displaced from their homes in Kosovo, with strict adherence to the

Brussels agreement of 2013. It is noteworthy that the report indicates that the rate of returns has continued to decrease — a trend we hope will be reversed. We welcome the establishment of the Interministerial Commission for Return and the implementation of the strategic objectives as established by the Ministry for Communities and Return.

In line with our established position, our country condemns and categorically rejects terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We note with concern the growing radicalization of young people and the increase in extremism, which has led to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters in countries of the Middle East and Africa. We therefore urge the systematic, concrete continuation of the efforts begun in Kosovo to combat this scourge, while also addressing the root causes.

In conclusion, we once again call on all parties to redouble their efforts in the search for a peaceful, just and lasting political solution within the framework of international law, including full observance of resolution 1244 (1999) and the Brussels agreements of 2013.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): I thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing. My delegation welcomes His Excellency Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and His Excellency Mr. Hashim Thaçi, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, and thanks them both for their statements.

Malaysia takes note of the overall stable security situation in Kosovo during the reporting period. We welcome the positive developments in Kosovo, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/579) and by Mr. Zarif. In particular, we commend the adoption of the constitutional amendment and legislation by the Kosovo Assembly to establish a specialist court to try cases arising from the findings of the European Union (EU) Special Investigative Task Force. We view that development as an important step for Kosovo in ensuring accountability and promoting reconciliation and closure among the communities in Kosovo. We are also pleased with the progress made towards EU integration with the recent approval by the European Commission of a Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo. We believe that will pave the way for social and economic development and reforms as well as the rule of law — all of which are vital for the long-term stability of Kosovo.

Other positive developments have also been made by Belgrade and Priština in implementing the 2013 Brussels agreement during the reporting period, including on the integration of the judiciary and civil protection personnel and the establishment of association of Serb-majority municipalities.

We hope the parties will remain steadfast in their commitment to implement the Brussels agreement and intensify their high-level engagement in the EU-facilitated dialogue. We believe today's exchanges could have been much more productive if they had not revisited nationalistic narratives. In the spirit of reconciliation, we urge both sides to move forward to ensure stability for the region and a common space for both communities.

Malaysia strongly supports efforts to counter violent terrorism. In that regard, we commend the commitment shown by Kosovo to combat radicalization and extremism, as illustrated by its hosting of International Interfaith Conference in Priština in June and by its high-level participation in the first regional summit on countering violent extremism in Tirana last May. Such efforts could build on the climate of trust, confidence and harmony among the various ethnicities and religions. Malaysia encourages further steps to build bridges within the various communities and will remain committed in supporting Kosovo to to that end.

In conclusion, I join my other colleagues in reaffirming support for UNMIK, which continues to play a key role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights in Kosovo. We also commend the role of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in the continued strengthening of the Kosovo's rule-olaw and judicial institutions. In view of his new portfolio, my delegation would like to convey our utmost appreciation to Mr. Zarif for his dedication and contribution as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK for the past four years. Malaysia welcomes his newly appointed successor, Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan, and looks forward to working closely with him to support the work of UNMIK.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to first thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of United Nations Interim Administration Mission in

Kosovo (UNMIK). We commend him on his devotion and commitment during his leadership of UNMIK, and we wish him our best in his future endeavours. I would like to welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, and thank them both for their statements.

Chad notes with satisfaction recent progress made in Kosovo in the political and legislative spheres as well as in terms of regional cooperation. We encourage the follow-up of high-level technical and political negotiations between Belgrade and Priština — under the auspices of the European Union — on issues concerning telecommunications, energy and the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, with the aim of forging long-lasting ties between the two parties.

The signing of the second Compact on Rule of Law in Kosovo will allow us to make progress on issues of responsibility, corruption, inter-ethnic crime, organized crime, gender issues, ethnic inclusion, strengthening the witness-protection system and pending land issues. That is an important step in institution-building. We welcome the effective cooperation between local leaders in northern Kosovo, especially between the majors of North and South Mitrovica on issues relating to budget and the payment of salaries to health care and education workers. We also welcome the verdicts handed down in the Drenica I and II war crimes cases.

Given the transnational challenges, particularly those related to the radicalization of young people and violent extremism, Chad encourages the Kosovo authorities in their struggle against socioeconomic factors that could lead to recruitment by radical groups. We believe that as Kosovo experienced one of the most devastating wars in Europe, work on justice towards reconciliation and confidence-building within communities and societies of the region remains a priority. To that end, we welcome the adoption on 3 August by the Assembly of Kosovo of constitutional amendments for the establishment of a specialist court to try cases referred by the European Union Special Investigative Task Force in the context of war crimes and organized crime allegations contained in the report of January 2011 presented by Dick Marty.

With regard to the issue of returns, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees recorded only 132 individual voluntary returns in the reporting period. The proposals and initiatives to build homes in return areas and to validate diplomas so as to allow people from non-majority groups to find employment in public institutions could certainly facilitate local returns. With respect to the 1,654 persons still missing, Chad calls on the Kosovo authorities to redouble their efforts to foster conditions conducive to ongoing investigations and provide follow-up to the victims' families.

With respect to regional cooperation, important steps have been taken in the context of security and promoting reconciliation. However, we regret and condemn acts of violence, particularly the clashes that took place on 9 and 10 May in Kumanovo, in the the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, leading to the deaths of 8 police officers and the wounding of 37 others. We welcome the cooperation of the Kosovo police in facilitating the conduct of an open investigation into these incidents with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice. We also welcome the State visit of the Serbian Prime Minister to Albania, which allowed discussions to be launched on joint infrastructure, socioeconomic development and security projects. We believe that the adoption by the Assembly of a resolution on the geographic delineation of the border with Montenegro will also help to improve the climate of regional understanding.

In conclusion, Chad is convinced that all these productive and constructive initiatives will help to improve the daily lives of citizens in Kosovo and reduce tensions for the benefit of all communities there. That progress has been achieved thanks to the readiness of the parties and the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Zarif, and his entire team. Chad commends and encourages UNMIK to continue to support initiatives for dialogue between the communities, in particular through capacity-building projects. We also commend the United Nations entities and the system's partners on the ground — particularly the Kosovo Force, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union — for their cooperation and contributions to reconciliation and stabilization in Kosovo.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Hashim Thaçi of

Kosovo for their statements. I also thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) for his briefing. Let me express our appreciation for his dedicated service at the helm of UNMIK and wish him every success in his new appointment as Special Representative for Liberia. I also wish our colleague Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan every success in his new job as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo.

We reiterate our support for the continued efforts of the European Union (EU) in facilitating the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue. Some concrete steps have already been taken in implementing the 19 April 2013 First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations, including on the integration of judiciary and civil protection personnel. Issues of energy, telecoms, the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo, freedom of movement and the Mitrovica bridge continue to be the focus of the discussions in the framework of the dialogue.

We welcome the progress achieved on the texts on the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities and on the implementation arrangements in the field of telecoms, and encourage the parties to demonstrate political will and engage constructively in reaching final political agreement on these and on other remaining matters, so necessary for the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina. Such normalization would first and foremost benefit the peoples of Kosovo and Serbia, with the mutual recognition of diplomas, the insurance of vehicles and freedom of movement being just a few of the concrete advantages that this would bring. We welcome the the memorandum of understanding on the mutual recognition of vehicle insurance policies, signed on the margins of the most recent EU-facilitated high-level meeting. The practical cooperation between the mayors of Mitrovicaon steps taken to facilitate returns is yet another sign of progress.

Like other delegations today, we welcome the adoption by the Assembly of Kosovo and signature by the President of the constitutiona! amendments and the law on the specialist court and the specialist prosecutor's office to try cases arising from the findings of the Special Investigative Task Force. We encourage the establishment of the specialist court with a mechanism for witness protection and hope to ensure that it will become operational at the earliest possibility.

We reiterate our support for the European integration efforts of both Kosovo and Serbia. The path of integration requires the constant and dedicated implementation of reforms. The EU's long-standing engagement is a clear demonstration of its firm commitment to the countries of the region. We expect a swift signature of the EU Stabilization and Association Agreement with Kosovo. It would strengthen EU-Kosovo relations and continue to provide a solid framework for the necessary social and economic reforms. We welcome the measures taken by the Kosovar authorities to address the issue of violent extremism and note that these efforts could be reinforced through strengthened cooperation among the countries of the region. While the security situation has remained calm, we note the continued role played by the Kosovo Force and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo in ensuring security and consolidating the rule of law.

Finally, acknowledging progress in the normalization of relations between Belgrade and Pristina and the stability in Kosovo, like our colleague from the United Kingdom, we reiterate our view that such progress should lead to reducing the frequency of UNMIK debates in the Council, also given the large and growing number of truly critical peace and security situations the Council has to tackle every day.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I too wish to thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his in-depth briefing and for all his efforts over the past few years. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

I welcome Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kosovo, and thank them both for their statements.

Jordan attaches great importance to the significant progress that has been made by the Government of Kosovo to honour its commitment to delivering stability and advancing towards regional integration. We would like to express our satisfaction with the progress being made on more than one front, in particular with regard to the amendments adopted by the Kosovo Assembly to pave the way for the establishment for a specialist court on war crimes — an issue towards which the European Union Task Force has been working in order to establish

accountability. We welcome that step to ensure the rule of law in the nation.

We call for all steps to be taken to protect religious minorities in Kosovo, including their property and goods, as well as steps to preserve the cultural heritage and religious sites in Kosovo. We call upon the Kosovo authorities to bring to justice all those who have perpetrated abuses against minorities or threatened the cultural heritage. It is essential to deliver on that in order to ensure that perpetrators do not enjoy impunity.

Meeting internal and security and political challenges in Kosovo will require the support of the international community, which must guarantee peace and stability in the country as well as in the countries of the region. We therefore express our support for the ongoing efforts to ensure that there is further agreement and better relations among all ethnic and other minorities in Kosovo. We must continue the economic and political reform programme, as well as to deliver on the development programme. We would like to emphasize the need to resolve issues relating to cadastres, border demarcation and missing persons, including also facilitating the return of the displaced. Such returns have dropped off considerably over the past few months. We must ensure that it increases and that those who do return can fully reintegrate into society.

We welcome the progress achieved by both Kosovo and Serbia as they seek to continue dialogue at all levels. We call upon them to redouble their efforts to ensure that relations between both countries can be strengthened and to expand the space for political consulation and dialogue between the two countries so that progress can be made on points of common interest. The goal should be to ensure that relations between Kosovo and Serbia can be normalized. We also call on both sides to ensure that the bilateral agreements reached thus far can be fully implemented.

We also believe that the support of the countries of the broader Balkan region is essential in order to ensure better peace and security in the region and a whole. All countries of the region have a common political interest in ensuring peace and stability while building on historical ties. We are aware that there have been obstacles in the way that have prevented such friendly ties at the broader regional level. However, making progress in that regard is the only way to break the cycle of violence and conflict. There is therefore a need for support to Kosovo and Serbia from their neighbours in order to open a new chapter in their history, one that paves the way towards development and prosperity in future.

It is essential that we establish a development and security partnership for the Balkan region in order to guarantee integration and peace. That can be achieved only with the support of the international community and of the broader region. Europe in particular has a special role, as it has the necessary capacity and diplomatic tools required to ensure that an agreement is reached between the various officials and countries in the Balkans. Given the well-known history of conflict in the region, perhaps the parties can learn from the model of the broader continent, where differences have been put aside.

We welcome the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement between the European Union and Serbia, which is a key step towards stability, as well as for the stability of Kosovo — should such an agreement be signed with that country as well, setting on a pather towards joining the European Union.

Jordan, which has recognized Kosovo as an independent, sovereign State, calls upon the international community to follow in our steps and do likewise. We also call upon the international community to allow Kosovo to join all international organizations and all agencies of the United Nations as an independent, sovereign country. That would allow the country to build a brighter future and pursue the path of political maturity, economic growht and social development, and put it in a better position to achieve lasting peace.

In conclusion, we would like to express our gratitude to UNMIK and all its staff for their considerable and commendable efforts and positive contributions to ensuring peace and security. We also commend the Head of Mission and his team for their professional attitude and dedication to achieve UNMIK's goals.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his briefing. I welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, to attend today's meeting. China also listened carefully to the statement made by Mr. Thaçi.

China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and understands the legitimate concerns of Serbia on the question of Kosovo. China believes that the best way to solve the question of Kosovo is to work out an appropriate solution acceptable to all the parties concerned through dialogue and negotiation, on the basis of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and in the framework of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

The current situation in Kosovo by and large continues to be stable, but still faces complex issues. China appreciates the vigorous efforts made by the Serbian Government to find a political solution to the Kosovo issue, and welcomes the fact that Belgrade and Pristina have recently continued to hold high-level talks. China supports the efforts by both parties to continue to pursue pragmatic and constructive dialogue in order to implement the existing agreements and to effectively protect the rights and interests of different ethnicities in Kosovo. The parties must continue their efforts to resolve their differences through dialogue and avoid any actions that may lead to further complicating or escalating the situation. Doing that would be conducive to the maintenance of peace and security in the Balkans and throughout Europe.

China commends the work being done by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) over the past four years under the leadership of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif and supports UNMIK's continuing efforts to implement the Council's mandate under the leadership of the new Special Representative, Ambassador Tanin. We hope that UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission and the Kosovo Force will carry out the tasks assigned under their respective mandates and strengthen their coordination and cooperation in order to play a constructive role in finding an appropriate settlement of the question of Kosovo.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), for his briefing on the current situation in Kosovo. We also thank Mr. Ivica Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, and Mr. Hashim Thaçi for their statements.

Although the security situation in the region has been said to be stable, we are seeing with concern violent incidents such as those that took place in Kumanovo, which could have destabilizing effects on reconciliation and regional cooperation. It is imperative to safeguard and expand elements for coexistence and to avoid acts that may endanger people's lives and relations between the different communities. We welcome the role played by the European Union in facilitating technical and high-level negotiations between Pristina and Belgrade, which are contributing to fomenting trust between the parties.

By way of our own long and painful experience, we have learned that for the sake of society, but especially for victims and their families, reconciliation genuinely requires justice and reparations. The establishment of a specialist court tasked with adjudicating the crimes committed during the conflict represents a step in that direction that will make it possible to apply the fundamental principles of justice and accountability. Likewise, knowing the whereabouts of persons who disappeared during the conflict is necessary to making progress towards justice and the truth. Moreover, it is the right of the families and must be addressed by the respective authorities. The designation of a new Chair of the Working Group on Missing Persons will be critical when the time comes to begin search efforts and identify reparation measures

As we have done in the Council on other occasions, we stress the central role that UNMIK continues to play in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights — a priority matter for moving forward in the process of reconciliation among the communities. Only in a context of respect for, and protection of, basic human rights is it possible to aspire to reconciliation and to a peaceful future.

With regard to the complaints of human rights violations allegedly committed by UNMIK between June 1999 and February 2008, the investigation undertaken by the UNMIK Human Rights Advisory Panel contributed to clarifying the facts. However, paragraph 59 of the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/579) makes clear that UNMIK did not act in accordance with the European Convention on Human Rights. It is vital to compensate the victims of those violations for the moral damage they incurred.

With regard to the implementation of resolution 1325 (1999), we stress the actions that have been taken to promote and protect the rights of women and gender equality. However, we believe it is necessary

to continue to work on activities that will enhance women's participation, on an equal footing with men, with respect to access to property and education, among other things. It is equally important to continue to adopt measures to integrate young people by addressing the socioeconomic factors that lead to an increase in recruitment activities by extremist groups.

I would like to underscore that resolution 1244 (1999) remains in full force as the internationally accepted legal basis for resolving the situation in Kosovo, including strict respect for the principle of territorial integrity.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude for the work of Mr. Zarif as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, including his efforts to promote peace and stability in Kosovo and the region throughout his tenure. We wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Mr. Stehelein (France) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for presenting the report (S/2015/579). I also thank the Foreign Ministers of Serbia and Kosovo, Mr. Dačić and Mr. Thaçi, respectively, for their statements. I would also like to express our deepest gratitude to Mr. Farid Zarif, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, whom we heard today for the last time in his current functions, for the work he accomplished during his term. Finally, on behalf of France, I would like to express our best wishes to his successor, Ambassador Tanin.

This year got off to a rocky start for Kosovo, but the new Government rose to the challenge. We welcome the adoption by the Parliament of Kosovo of constitutional amendments allowing for the establishment of a specialist court that will shed light on the allegations of war crimes set out in the Marty report that was presented to the Council of Europe in 2011 and that have been pursued by the Special Investigation Task Force. It is essential for that courageous decision by the Kosovo Parliament be followed up in all its dimensions. The resolution of this matter is crucial in order to demonstrate Kosovo's commitment to the fight against impunity and constitutes an essential milestone in the process of normalizing its relations with Serbia, which is particularly vital in the context of its rapprochement with Europe.

Another symbolic matter on which significant progress is awaited concerns the establish of an association of Serb municipalities in Kosovo, which is essential for the future of the Serb population of Kosovo. The statutory unity of Kosovo will in no way be called into question by the setting up of such a structure. Such a measure must not be subject to further delay, given that two years have already elapsed since the agreement was signed on 19 April 2013. We expect the authorities in Pristina to redouble their efforts to bring about that essential element of reconciliation with Belgrade. Those two processes are inseparable in order to strengthen the trust of the entire population in the institutional framework of Kosovo.

Political dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, initiated under the auspices of the European Union, regularly takes place at the highest level. We congratulate both parties for their unrelenting pursuit of dialogue, which confirms the hopes of their own peoples as well as of the international community. The progress so far has been slow but real. We would like in that regard to call on both parties to continue their exchange with a view to the future. It is not merely a question of working towards a formal normalization of relations, but also of building authentic long-term, mutually profitable relations as good neighbours.

In that regard, Kosovo's future also requires the consolidation of the rule of law. We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our unwavering support for the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), which works on a daily basis to support the rule of law and security in Kosovo. We call on Serbia to fully engage in the mechanism of mutual legal assistance established by EULEX, in a spirit of active cooperation. We also call on the Kosovar authorities, which aspire to UNESCO membership, to guarantee the protection of religious sites, in particular the monastery of Visoki Dečani. That is an absolutely fundamental requirement.

It would be remiss of me to conclude without invoking the European perspective, which recognizes the integrity of the Balkan countries as a whole. Over the course of the past several years, Serbia has made significant efforts to draw closer to the European Union, whether through internal reforms or by improving its relations with its neighbours. We congratulate them once again for those efforts, encourage them to pursue the full implementation of their existing agreements with Pristina and reiterate our wish to see them join the European Union as soon as possible, once the necessary conditions have been met. In that regard, we hope that a

first chapter in that negotiation process will be written this year.

We are aware of and support Kosovo's wish to follow the same path, which is equally necessary for the future of that country. We know that the Kosovar authorities are fully aware of the challenges. We reiterate our trust in them and our full support for their efforts, proof of which is the stabilization and association agreement due to be signed in the very near future.

Finally, along with other delegations, in the light of the progress made so far, which we tirelessly applaud every three months, we hope that the Council will at last reconsider the frequency with which it takes up this matter as a prelude to a comprehensive review of the entire set of international measures concerning Kosovo.

Mr. Pressman (United States of America): We welcome Foreign Ministers Thaçi and Dačić back to the Security Council. I commend both their countries on their continued dedication to the normalization of relations through the European-led dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia. We believe that progress is indeed being made, even if the tone of parts of today's discussion did not evince it. Let us be clear. The hands extended by Serbia and Kosovo for reconciliation must be firmly grasped. The kind of nationalistic rhetoric we have heard in the Council today needs to end. It is wholly counterproductive. To that end, the United States agrees with other colleagues who, while recognizing that the situation in Kosovo remains an important matter for the Councils' attention, believe that the three-month reporting cycle has long outlived its usefulness. The Security Council should extend the reporting period for the Secretary-General to every six months.

I would also like to thank Special Representative Zarif for his briefing. We commend him for his service and dedication to Kosovo and wish him well in his next assignment, in Liberia. We welcome also the appointment of Ambassador Tanin as the next Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo.

The United States has been a champion of accountability throughout South-East Europe for the crimes committed during the Balkan wars. Our commitment has been to the principle of justice and accountability for all as an essential ingredient to sustainable peace. The last time the Security Council met to discuss Kosovo (see S/PV.7448), the United States made it clear that Kosovo must uphold its commitments to respond to allegations of serious crimes committed between 1998 and 2000, by adopting the legal measures required to set up a robust specialist court to adjudicate those cases. The allegations made by a few individuals must not be held against the legitimate aspirations and honour of the people of Kosovo. The best way to ensure this is to advance individual justice for the crimes that have been alleged. As a steadfast friend and supporter of the Republic of Kosovo, a sovereign, democratic and multi-ethnic State that exemplifies Euro-Atlantic values, we commend Kosovo's Government and Assembly for having passed the constitutional amendment and law to establish this specialist court, which will be able to issue indictments and try cases in connection with the evidentiary findings of the Special Investigative Task Force.

There are serious allegations contained in these findings, including of war crimes and other crimes against humanity, and they deserve serious judicial examination. Voting to establish this court was not easy politically; voting to advance accountability rarely is, but it is essential, and it was a major step forward in fulfilling Kosovo's international commitments and a clear demonstration of the commitment of the people of Kosovo to the values of human rights and the rule of law, values that we in the United States and our partners in the European Union and so many of us around this table hold dear.

We applaud Kosovo's leaders for their vision and ability to put politics aside for the future of their country. But the passage of this law is only the first step. The Government must quickly conclude the negotiations on a host State agreement with the European Union (EU) and the Netherlands so that the specialist court can indeed be established.

While Kosovo has worked diligently to improve its judicial structures, the European Rule of Law Mission (EULEX) and the NATO-led Kosovo Force continue to play indispensable roles in building security and rule-of-law capacity in the country. Kosovo's judicial institutions will continue to need support to handle highly complicated cases related to terrorism, war crimes, human rights abuses, sanctions and corruption.

As the end of EULEX's mandate nears, in 2016, consideration should be given to mechanisms for addressing outstanding cases and for continued support to Kosovo's judicial and law-enforcement institutions.

Increased coordination between EULEX and KFOR is more important now than ever.

As I mentioned at the outset, we have been encouraged to learn of progress towards normalization of relations through the EU-facilitated dialogue. The parties are closer than ever to resolving the outstanding issues, including the principles for establishing the association of Serb municipalities, energy, telecommunications and freedom of movement on Mitrovica bridge. We strongly encourage both sides to find compromises on the outstanding issues from the 2013 Brussels agreement and reach agreements that improve the lives of Kosovo residents regardless of their ethnicity. We look forward to a positive outcome in the next round of the dialogue, on 25 August. Compromise on these issues will indeed be difficult but remains essential to advancing the aspirations of both Kosovo and Serbia to further integrate into European and trans-Atlantic institutions.

We also commend both Serbia and Kosovo for their continued commitment to fighting terrorism and addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. Both countries have worked to develop effective preventive and response mechanisms to counter violent extremism. We support efforts by both Serbian and Kosovo officials to find practical ways to cooperate on critical law-enforcement and counter-terrorism issues. To be effective, it is essential that international cooperation on counter-terrorism, countering violent extremism and law enforcement include all of the Balkans. That is why we fully support Kosovo's joining INTERPOL in the near term to enhance direct coordination between Kosovo and the international law-enforcement community.

In this vein, we repeat our call for all States Members of the United Nations to acknowledge the importance of Kosovo's membership in INTERPOL as a means to further facilitate law-enforcement cooperation on counter-terrorism and organized crime. It is in all of our interests to approve Kosovo's bid for membership at the INTERPOL General Assembly meeting in November. Isolating Kosovo from participation in the instruments of international cooperation on issues as important as this only handicaps our collective efforts.

We also fully support Kosovo's bid for membership in UNESCO. Kosovo's membership in UNESCO would reinforce the importance that the international community places on the World Heritage sites in Kosovo and the responsibilities of Kosovo authorities for preserving those sites. Based on the Vienna formula, Kosovo is eligible for membership in UNESCO as a result of being a member of two United Nations specialized agencies, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. We believe that it is important and that all Member States should support Kosovo in this effort.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, and we share his sentiments.

We are grateful to Mr. Farid Zarif for the presentation of the report (S/2015/579) and for his many years of conscientious work as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. We wish him every success in his new and important posting in Liberia.

Mr. Zarif's briefing and the statements we have heard have convinced us once again that the situation in Kosovo is far from stable and should remain under continuing international review. The statements made by Mr. Thaçi only confirm that there are still very major problems in the province linked, inter alia, to a genuine attitude towards reconciliation. The situation in the western Balkans as a whole remains turbulent. We have seen how easily ill-advised words and actions can reopen the long-standing wounds of old conflicts and also how failure to tackle the root causes are reflected in the contemporary realities of the region.

The Balkans face a number of serious challenges, including inter-ethnic and interreligious antagonisms, the surge in Islamist extremism and mass migration. In Kosovo, the situation is further complicated by socioeconomic problems and the increase in unemployment, which stands at 55 per cent among young people. That is why we deem it important not to drop our guard or ignore the consequences of the conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

Many years have gone by, but the difficult repercussions of this European tragedy continue to rear their head, first of all with regard to the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons who still have not been able to return to their homes. This problem cannot be swept under the carpet.

Secondly, we are troubled by the resurgence in the activities of militant organizations such as the Kosovo Liberation Army and armed groups that were previously demilitarized in line with the universally adopted decisions of the Security Council. The incident that took place in Kumanovo in May exposed the serious shortcomings that exist in terms of control over cross-border movement by Kosovo criminal groups into neighbouring countries. This represents a failure, including on the part of the Kosovo Force.

Thirdly — and this thought was clearly expressed at today's meeting in the statements made by our partners — we must continue our efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of serious crimes. We must do so objectively and without any double standards.

After lengthy prevarication by Pristina, a decision was finally adopted that should pave the way for the creation of a specialist court to investigate the crimes committed by members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, including the trafficking in human organs that was uncovered in the Marty report. Once again, the decision was adopted under great international pressure, and the result was achieved only after many months of arm-twisting. What does that say about so-called Kosovo statehood? There is no certainty at all that the mechanism being created in line with that will be effective and protected from sabotage tactics. Moreover, we are also troubled that the signing of the law to establish the specialist court has been deferred while the radical opposition attempts to challenge it. We will keep that under close review.

In any case, the perpetrators of crimes must be brought to account regardless of the office they now hold. We trust that the topic will be kept under full review by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, the international community and Mr. Zahir Tanin when he heads the Mission. Moreover, we trust that they will draw on the records of Serbian structures, above all those of the Serbian special prosecutor on war crimes, in terms of their extensive evidence on the cases in question. That is a major issue.

Turning to the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina under the mediation of the European Union, we are seriously troubled by the failure to fully address the main issue, which is the establishment of a community of Serbian municipalities in Kosovo, in step with the arrangements the parties agreed in 2013, whereby the Serb communities would be granted genuine powers designed to guarantee the survival of the Serb minority. The plight of the Kosovar Serbs in the province is also a serious concern. Violations of their rights continue, including incidents committed on an inter-ethnic basis and cases of desecration of Serbian Orthodox Church shrines. Kosovo is riven with corruption. Decisions taken in Kosovo judicial instances are of an increasingly political character.

An illustration of that is the situation concerning the property dispute between the Kosovar Albanian economic entities, which are supported by the municipal authorities, and the Visoki Dečani Monastery. In that case, the court found against the monastery. The illegitimate nature of the latest judicial decision was highlighted both by United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, a very reputable decision. The verdict must be reviewed. It is being politicized and it is urgent that the review of that verdict take place.

Ensuring the security and protection of Serbian Orthodox monasteries and churches was and remains a fundamental obligation, duty and responsibility of the authorities in Pristina. What is happening with the monastery in Visoki Dečani, the Church of Saint Petka and other cathedrals is categorically unacceptable. Order must be brought to the situation. The situation must be addressed, including through the assistance of the international presence. The issue must receive special attention from the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

We are concerned at Pristina's continuing steps aimed at transforming the Kosovo security forces into a full-fledged armed forces. There is no doubt in this case that we are talking about a blatant violation of resolution 1244 (1999), which does not provide for the presence in the provincial territory of any armed groups other than the Kosovo Force and an agreed number of Serbian military personnel. The resolution stipulates clear requirements with regard to the demiliaritization of all Kosovar Albanian armed groups.

We need to continue our efforts to curb the participation of Kosovars in conflicts in the Middle East. Again, this consideration was clearly highlighted today in most of the statements made by the members of the Security Council, including mention of their recruitment by the Islamic State and other radical organizations. Local authorities acknowledge that, in

terms of numbers fighting in hotspots, Kosovo has the highest number in Europe of nationals per capita who are fighting in such groups. However, effectively combating that problem at an expert legislative level is something that the authorities have acknowledged that they are unable to do. We trust that the problem will stay in the field of vision of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and of other international presences, whose activities in the province must continue.

In conclusion, I want to reaffirm our support to the activities of the Mission, which remain the main international presence in the province. Mr. Zarif has done a great deal to make the Mission perform at the highest level in implementing its commitments. The Mission must command all the necessary financial and personnel resources. We stress the importance of its neutral status, its conscientiousness and its proactive implementation of the mandates in the light of resolution 1244 (1999). We are certain that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Zahir Tanin, will assume his new tasks with his characteristic sense of responsibility. We wish him every success. We call on the Kosovar Albanians to fully cooperate with the new Special Representative.

Russia's position on the issue of Kosovo remains unchanged. Resolution 1244 (1999) remains fully in force as the mandatory international legal basis for a resolution in Kosovo. No one is entitled to amend that resolution, or any other Security Council decision; and no one is entitled to ignore them. They must be mandatatorily implemented by all.

We support the current reporting cycle and frequency of reporting by the Secretary-General, because expanding it will not resolve the problems. We will simply see them pile up further. As seen in today's Council meeting, it appears that those problems remain very serious. The Council must regularly continue to keep under review what is happening in the province.

Ms. Darlow (New Zealand): Like others, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his briefing this morning and for his efforts over the past four years as the Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK) in Kosovo. I wish him well in his next role, and we look forward to working with his successor. I also welcome Deputy Prime Minister Dačić and Mr. Thaçi to the meeting.

The last time the Council considered this agenda item (see S/PV.7448), we, like others, urged the Kosovo Assembly to take the remaining steps required in order to establish a specialist court to try cases arising from the European Union Special Investigative Task Force. We are therefore pleased to note that the Assembly recently voted to approve a constitutional amendment for the establishment of the specialist court. We warmly welcome that move, which we recognize was not easy. It demonstrates an important commitment, not only to justice and accountability but also, ultimately, to long-term reconciliation.

The decision of the Kosovo Assembly was an important step towards addressing the serious allegations that have been made, but it was of course just a first step. There remains much to do before the specialist court and associated prosecutor's office are established and functioning. Reaching that point will not be a simple process. We therefore urge all involved to build on the momentum of the decision of the Kosovo Assembly and to drive the process forward expeditiously.

In terms of the political situation, we welcome the continued high-level engagement between Belgrade and Pristina in the European Union-facilitated dialogue. We encourage both sides to approach the dialogue constructively. The more progress that is made in normalizing relations, the more flexibility will need to be shown by all leaders in order to address core issues. Particular attention is needed to resolve outstanding issues in northern Kosovo. Practical cooperation, such as that demonstrated by the mayors of South and North Mitrovica, helpfully contributes to the process. Beyond that, we encourage both sides to make progress on other issues identified in the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/579), including the protection of cultural and religious sites, the issue of internally displaced persons and the question of missing persons.

Finally, with respect to the frequency with which the Council considers this agenda item, New Zealand echoes the words of others this morning and reiterates the comments we made during the Council's most recent discussion on Kosovo, regarding the organization of the Council's work. We are not convinced that the Council's current practice with respect to UNMIK is calibrated optimally. While it is important for the Council to hear from those affected by its decisions, we believe that there should be flexibility in how the Council monitors

the situation in Kosovo so that it can more appropriately reflect the situation on the ground.

Mr. Casimiro (Angola): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Farid Zarif, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (S/2015/579). We welcome the participation in today's briefing of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia and thank him for his statement. We equally welcome Mr. Hashim Thaçi.

Angola reaffirms its position that resolution 1244 (1999) remains the applicable legal framework in efforts to reach a solution for Kosovo through dialogue and negotiation, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Council resolutions. We therefore support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Serbia and understand the legitimate concerns of that country on the Kosovo issue.

We underline the fundamental role played by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) in the Kosovo region in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights, its cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, and its engagement with Pristina and Belgrade. We continue to note that the overall security situation in Kosovo remains calm and stable.

Concerning the general political environment, we value the ongoing Belgrade-Pristina high-level engagement in the European Union-facilitated dialogue, in particular the meeting in Brussels on 23 and 29 June under the auspices of the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Addressing outstanding issues of implementation, including the establishment of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities, is one of the main points of contention in terms of the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations of 19 April 2013. We hope that a final political agreement can be reached soon.

We welcome the resumed participation of Kosovo Serb representatives from the Serbian Civic Initiative in the Kosovo Government and Assembly after an absence of two months, enabling the governing coalition to promote its extensive legislative programme. We regret the failure of the Assembly of Kosovo to approve a constitutional amendment on the establishment of a specialist court for the prosecution of war crimes committed during the Kosovo war.

Concerning human rights, we welcome the organization on 21 and 22 April of a conference on the implementation of a legal framework on the protection of the rights of women and gender equality, which took place in Pristina. We also welcome the adoption on 28 May by the Assembly of Kosovo, with assistance from the OSCE, of the human rights law package, comprising new laws on gender equality, anti-discrimination and the Ombudsperson institution, as well as amendments to laws on the composition and functions of the judiciary and the Kosovo strategy on property rights.

We are deeply concerned over youth radicalization, violent extremism and other transnational challenges affecting the Kosovo region. We call on the authorities to adopt and implement energetic measures and policies to counter such negative and dangerous trends.

Finally, we commend the continued active role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo in facilitating dialogue among communities and officials and with international organizations, particularly those focused on efforts aimed at preventing and reducing tensions and promoting cooperation among local authorities. We value the work carried out by UNMIK under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Farid Zarif, in the promotion of security, stability, rule of law and respect for human rights, in accordance with the Mission's mandate.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

First, I want to acknowledge the presence of Mr. Ivica Dačić, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia. I thank him for sharing his perspectives with the Council. I also thank Mr. Hashim Thaçi for his statement.

I want to thank in particular Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zarif for his insightful briefing on recent developments in Kosovo. We are in his great debt for the dedication and sprit of perseverance that he has demonstrated in fulfilling his mission. While we wish him well in his next assignment, we welcome very warmly our colleague Mr. Tanin, as his worthy successor in Kosovo.

We believe that when Belgrade and Pristina endorsed the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relations on 19 April 2013, the stage was set for a visible and sustainable improvement of relations between Serbia and Kosovo. Today, we are encouraged by the continuation of the technical and high-level dialogue between the parties in addressing the outstanding issues related to the Agreement.

There is, however, a risk of reversing the gains achieved thus far in peaceful intercommunity relations if the parties are unable to achieve consensus in implementing its outstanding provisions. The conflicting interpretations by both sides on the issue of the formation of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities constitutes an obstacle to the full implementation of the agreement. That is why we underscore the need for the parties not only to exercise flexibility, but also to remain steadfast in their commitment to the process.

It is significant that the technical talks between the parties in the framework of the customs agreement are witnessing continuing progress, with the support of the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX). The dialogue has been successful in reaching agreement for the opening of two interim border crossings by 2016. Through that mechanism, hitherto controlled goods, including much-needed medicines, will be transported freely across boundaries, thereby promoting increased commercial opportunities and providing relief to the sick.

The relationship between justice and reconciliation is another important dimension of Serbia-Kosovo relations. Let me emphasize the nexus between justice and reconciliation. There is an inextricable link between them. In ensuring that the success of reconciliation is complete, it is imperative that the families of the victims of the Kosovo and Metohija conflict receive justice. That is why, in our view, the establishment of a specialist court to try war crimes is an important and significant development. We expect that the findings of the EULEX Special Investigative Task Force concerning the inhumane treatment of people and illicit trafficking in human organs will lead to the prosecution of the perpetrators.

Genuine reconciliation remains crucial to strengthening cohesion and laying the foundation for peace and progress. The confidence-building projects embarked upon by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) have been appropriately designed to achieve that objective. They are facilitating dialogue not only between faiths but also between cultures, and are already yielding tangible results. Let there be no doubt about the pivotal role of UNMIK in the promotion of security and stability in Kosovo — it cannot be ignored. UNMIK remains the bridge and the bridge-builder. We encourage the Mission and the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Tanin, to be unrelenting in their quests for the achievement of the mandate in Kosovo.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The representative of Serbia has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Dačić (Serbia) (*spoke in Serbian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): Please allow me briefly to respond to several statements we heard in various interventions. I am very surprised that some of the participants of at this meeting have said that we inserted nationalist rhetoric into the discussion. I simply raised the issue of Serbian cultural heritage, its protection and the devastation of our monuments — monuments tht date from the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That has nothing to do with nationalist rhetoric. What do members of the Council think? Should we applaud such acts of violence?

I am certain that we have the right to say something in our own defence. To everything that I have presented and demonstrated, Mr. Thaçi responded with the word "genocide". No, he first started with "fascism", "racism", "genocide", "rape" and "nationalist rhetoric". Those were the words he used. First of all — to the representatives of the United States, the United Kingdom and France — in both World Wars Serbia and Yugoslavia were your allies and fought on your side in the coalition against fascism. We can never be on the fascist side. We fought against Albania in the First and Second World Wars. As members of the Council know, when it comes to Albania, after the World Wars Yugoslavia was an advocate of friendship between Enver Hoxha and Tito. Those allegations of genocide, racism and fascism are absurd. Mister Thaçi mentioned thousands of rapes. I am not against a court delivering a judgement against someone accused of allegedly committing a crime. But regarding that number, those thousands of rapes that were actually mentioned and

the alleged rapes of young men — Mr. Thaçi cannot apply double standards in regard to us.

I expect the great Powers to corroborate everything that we did in past centuries, and not remain silent in the wake of the accusations that we are facing — that we are fascists, engage in racial rhetoric, that we are rapists. I do not know what kind of words they are, but UNESCO proclaimed four sites under its protection to be in danger. From whom are they in danger? Not from our side. That is why we object to Kosovo's bid for membership in UNESCO.

Eight out of 15 countries here have recognized the independence of Kosovo, but I would like members to be circumspect and to refrain from calling other countries to recognize the independence of Kosovo. I listened to the statement made by the representative of Jordan, and I must say that Jordan has not had diplomatic relations with Israel because of Palestine. I hope that there will not come a time when its territorial integrity will be called into question, and then having to wait for everyone else to make a decision in regard to its territorial integrity. I hope Jordan will not experience that first-hand. We cannot applaud those and similar decisions.

We wish to have excellent relations with the United States of America, as we deem it to be of key importance for our future. But I would like to raise one question because the United States called on all Member States to support Kosovo's bid to UNESCO. Can I ask the United States of America, where were its principles when it asked Member States a couple of years ago not to vote for Palestine? I recall that President Obama said that all countries should refrain and wait until Israel and Palestine reach an agreement before they recognized Palestine. Now the United States of America is asking for the recognition of Kosovo and the admission of Kosovo to UNESCO. But the same principle was not applied in the case of Palestine.

Members of the Council know that at our latest meeting in Brussels we were not able to reach an agreement because the Albanian side was not willing to accept all the agreements put on the table before us. The Albanian delegation, which also included Mr. Thaçi, refused this. He now mentions propaganda and all pictures that I brought with me here of devastated sites. Can he respond to those pictures — whether they are genuine or not? Who is this person who demolished the cross on the Orthodox church? Was he arrested? Does the graffiti at this protected UNESCO World Heritage site not say "ISIS", "there is no god but Allah" and "the Caliphate is coming"? I would just like to hear a response to those questions.

I genuinely desire good relations with Pristina, and Mr. Thaçi and I have established things on the right footing and have initiated this in all good will. But I must regretfully say that the same double standard that has been applied to Israel and Palestine is being applied to Kosovo. I am here as the representative of the Republic of Serbia, and my task is to defend its interests and those of the Serbian people. When we are speaking of propaganda, I would like to point out that Kosovo has apparently already become a member of the United Nations. We should note that Mr. Thaçi's statement is presented as that of Mr. Thaçi, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo. Have we thus recognized Kosovo at this meeting of the Security Council as a Member of the United Nations? We have witnessed this kind of thing for years now and have tolerated it because we do not want to exacerbate the issues. But why are we being accused of being fascist or racist when we discuss reconciliation? How can our words be condemned when we are speaking and showing our concern about our cultural heritage? What is wrong with my statements?

I would like to clarify that issue. I am genuinely trying to find a sustainable solution to the Kosovo issue, because in the status quo we are in, while Serbia is said to be acting constructively, behind our backs preparations are being made to recognize Kosovo as a unilaterally proclaimed State. What is the difference between that unilateral act of Pristina and the situation of Israel and Palestine? I ask any country what it would do if it experienced such a thing on its territory. That is why it is important to uphold principles, and in our case every principle has been flagrantly infringed and violated. But double standards are something we will never accept. As an example of this, I can cite two statements by Hashim Thaçi recorded today, the first to the effect that our cultural heritage has never been better protected than it is today in Kosovo — when I have shown the Council the pictures of what remains of the Serbian cultural sites and monuments — and the second saying that Albanians have always constituted the majority population in Kosovo.

I should note that we wish to continue to cooperate well and to maintain our dialogue in Brussels. We are a very small country, and we cannot exert influence on the work of the Security Council. Since it has been

stated that resolution 1244 (1999) is still in force, and yet other countries are being urged not to comply with or uphold that resolution, I believe we should hold a meeting to discuss whether it is still in force and why double standards are being applied in that regard. Instead of reacting to these photographs with a concrete response, some have spoken of fascism, racism and so on. I find myself compelled to ask why I am here and why the Council wants to have a dialogue with us. Why are the great Powers saying that Serbia is a leader in the region and a factor in its stabilization? I do not wish to hear other countries insult my country, and that does not contribute to reconciliation. On 27 August Austria is organizing a meeting in Vienna, even proposing a soccer match between the countries aspiring to membership of the European Union (EU) and EU member States, and we are required to show concrete examples of such things as the preservation of cultural heritage, to demonstrate our willingness to cooperate.

I have nothing against other ethnic and religious communities speaking on the situation in Belgrade or other cities and towns in Serbia. We do not want to be told we are fascists or racists. Twenty years have passed since the war and armed conflict. Many things had changed significantly 20 years after, and since the end of the Second World War. Yet 20 years after the end of our conflict, we are still experiencing the same state of affairs and the same conflicts. I simply wished to explain my reaction to this and I will not repeat it again.

The President: Mr. Hashim Thaçi has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Thaçi (*spoke in Albanian; interpretation provided by the delegation*): I am sorry that this platform is being misused for the purposes of political propaganda and everyday political issues in Serbia. Kosovo is a new, multi-ethnic country and a State whose citizens are equal before the law. I am very sorry that we are wasting the Security Council's time.

We could talk and debate for hours, but the facts are clear and unalterable. In my opening remarks I mentioned that there could be no document, even in this institution, capable of containing all the crimes and the genocide that Serbia committed in Kosovo. The war is over. Kosovo is an independent and sovereign country, now recognized by 111 States. It is a member of major international mechanisms and organizations. It is strengthening its international status and has built excellent relations with all the countries in the region. In the coming days we will sign a border demarcation agreement with Montenegro. We have fostered very good neighbourly relations with a view to ensuring peace and stability in the region. We have also begun to normalize relations between Serbia and Kosovo on an equal footing. Despite all the difficulties in implementing the agreements, the dialogue has been successful. I do not wish to discuss history here, but let me just say that Kosovo is now on a clear path towards progress and Euro-Atlantic integration, including being a part of NATO, the European Union and the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the Security Council, I wold like to express our gratitude to Mr. Farid Zarif, who today made his last briefing to the Council in his capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). We have appreciated his leadership of UNMIK and we wish him every success in his new assignment.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.7511

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7511th meeting

Tuesday, 25 August 2015, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Ms. Ramoškaitė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Diaz de la Guardia Beuno
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Méndez Graterol

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (S/2015/655)

Letter dated 21 August 2015 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/656)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan (S/2015/655)

Letter dated 21 August 2015 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/656)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome Ms. Løj, who is joining us at this meeting via video teleconference from Juba.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/655, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on South Sudan.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/656, which contains the text of a letter dated 21 August 2015 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2206 (2015) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Ms. Løj, Mr. O'Brien and Ambassador Cristián Barros Melet, Permanent Representative of Chile, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan.

I now give the floor to Ms. Løj.

Ms. Løj: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to present the latest report (S/2015/655) of the Secretary-General on South Sudan, and to update the Security Council on events since its finalization.

Following the partial signing of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development-plus peace agreement, on 17 August, international and regional partners urged the President to sign the agreement by the end of the 15-day deadline and called on all parties to immediately cease all hostilities. Upon his return from Addis Ababa, President Salva Kiir commenced intensive consultations with various constituencies. Yesterday, the President chaired a pivotal leadership meeting attended by senior Government officials, members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) National Liberation Council, its Political Bureau and its secretariat, ministers, governors, chairpersons of independent commissions, as well as the Speakers and Deputy Speakers of the National Legislative Assembly and the Council of the States. A mini-summit has been called for tomorrow, where the Government of the Republic of South Sudan is expected to sign the proposed agreement — as it stated — "in the interest of peace".

Despite that hopefully positive development, the security situation on the ground has been volatile and tense. Fighting in the Greater Upper Nile region has remained intense, and a further escalation of hostilities in southern Unity state has had increasingly severe consequences for the civilian population. Major offensives conducted by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its allied militias into Opposition-held areas have led to further deterioration of the security and humanitarian situations since April, and have resulted in numerous reports of grave human rights violations. Most recently, on 19 August, fighting occurred between SPLA and Opposition forces around Leer town, with both sides trading accusations of having initiated the attack.

In Upper Nile state, heavy fighting between the SPLA and the SPLM/Army in Opposition, along with its allied Shilluk militias, has centred around the state capital Malakal, which has changed hands several times since April. Both sides remain in close proximity to each other along the banks of the Nile River, with numerous skirmishes taking place in Malakal and in the northern town of Melut. I am disappointed that the parties have not observed the cessation of hostilities or the ceasefire that they agreed to in Addis Ababa.

The Bahr el-Ghazal and the Equatoria regions also witnessed further deterioration in the security situation,

with low intensity fighting between armed groups. Between 29 July and 2 August, tensions escalated in Yambio county, Western Equatoria state, with the occurence of clashes involving SPLA, national police, local youth, a community defence group and Dinka youth. Over 5,000 civilians were briefly displaced.

On the domestic political front, on 16 August, the four elected governors of Central Equatoria, Upper Nile, Warrap and Western Equatoria states were dismissed, and the caretaker Governor of Northern Bahr el-Ghazal state was also replaced. On 20 August, the five newly appointed caretaker Governors were sworn into office by the President. Shortly after he was relieved of his position, the Western Equatoria state governor was arrested at his residence in Juba, but was later released. On 21 August, the Speaker of the Western Equatoria state Legislative Assembly was killed in an ambush in his state; further details of his killing are not yet known.

The escalation of fighting has sparked further displacements. Civilians from conflict-affected counties in southern Unity State have fled to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) protection-of-civilians site in Bentiu, while new internally displaced persons from the west bank of the Nile have arrived at the UNMISS base in Malakal. UNMISS is now providing protection to over 200,000 internally displaced persons at six protection-of-civilians sites. The Bentiu site has experienced the largest recent increase in internally displaced persons, up by 140 per cent since late April, while the population at the Malakal site has grown by almost 50 per cent just since mid-July. The escalation of fighting also sparked violent tensions between Dinka, Nuer and Shilluk internally displaced persons within the Malakal site.

The large influx of internally displaced persons into UNMISS bases during the reporting period and the resulting rise in political, ethnic and tribal tensions, as well as criminal activity in the camps, underscores once again the unsustainability of these protection sites for the longer term. As mentioned in my previous briefing to the Council, in May (see S/PV.7444), more attention must be paid to preventing the sites from becoming attractions for those looking for the services available therein, rather than for those in need of physical protection.

To that end, UNMISS has further expanded its reach outside of the sites through short, long and dynamic air and integrated patrols, in order to increase security for the local population while also facilitating conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In particular, UNMISS has scaled up its protection-of-civilians efforts in Unity xtate by projecting a security presence in previously inaccessible areas. However, capacity and resource constraints and deliberate obstruction by the parties have limited those efforts.

I would like to thank our military and police personnel for their gallant efforts to protect civilians in an increasingly difficult environment. I would urge troop- and police-contributing countries, along with other Member States, to help equip and accelerate the deployment of UNMISS personnel and resources and give them the additional resources they need.

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan is dire. Over 2.2 million people remain displaced. Over 4.6 million people are already facing crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity. The situation in Unity state is particularly alarming, as prevailing insecurity prevents humanitarian access to displaced communities. On 14 August, the World Food Programme commenced food air drops to Wau Shilluk, in Upper Nile state, which has significantly reduced the number of civilians arriving at the UNMISS protection site in Malakal.

UNMISS has continued to provide force protection to road and barge convoys and other activities to enable humanitarian agencies to meet the primary needs of those at risk. Yet the delivery of humanitarian assistance is being severely challenged by land, riverine and air movement restrictions and the heightened risk of being caught in crossfire.

With respect to the human rights situation in South Sudan, I am deeply shocked by the parties' utter disrespect for human life. UNMISS continues to receive reports of gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict. On 29 June, UNMISS released a human rights flash report documenting human rights violations that were perpetrated as fighting escalated in the Greater Upper Nile region in April and May. Reported violations include indiscriminate killings, rape and other sexual violence, abductions of civilians and the destruction of civilian objects, property and livelihoods. The deliberate targeting of innocent civilians, including women, children and the elderly, must stop immediately, and the culture of impunity must end.

I am also concerned by the recent restrictions placed on press freedom in the country, including through the

detention of, threats to and violence against journalists. Although the circumstances around the recent killing of Peter Moi, a journalist of the *New Nation* newspaper, are still unclear, the event raises serious concern. I urge a swift and thorough investigation into the incident. Noting that the Government has made repeated commitments to press freedom, it is important that they match words with action. I strongly encourage the Government to implement the Media Authority, Broadcast Corporation and Right of Access to Information Act, which was signed into law in December 2013. Ensuring the safety and security of members of the press and swiftly investigating incidents of violence and intimidation against journalists are critical.

As I have noted in previous briefings to the Council, UNMISS continues to face serious obstacles to its operations, including grave obstructions by both parties to its freedom of movement. That limits the Mission's ability to protect civilians and monitor the human rights situation, while also delaying and interrupting the movement of life-saving humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable. I would like again to urge all parties to allow unhindered freedom of movement for Mission and humanitarian operations.

Following the hopefully successful conclusion to the peace talks, we must bear in mind that implementation will have significant resource implications. The agreement includes a number of important tasks for the Mission and several implied tasks that will require UNMISS support. In orienting the Mission to assume those functions, we must be careful that resources are not diverted from key mandated tasks, particularly the protection of civilians. The four pillars of the current mandate of UNMISS will continue to be necessary and critical to creating an environment in which peace can take root.

As we welcome hopefully the signing of the agreement by the Government, I would reiterate my call to the leaders of South Sudan to place the interests of their people above their personal ambitions and implement the peace agreement in good faith. While we will all do everything possible to support implementation, I must remind the Council that this agreement, albeit very important, is only a first step. Peace, stability and prosperity will not come to South Sudan overnight. The process will require concerted and sustained efforts from both national stakeholders and international partners.

Focus will also need to be drawn to the range of intercommunal and other conflicts, which in some states prove to be just as violent as the political struggle. We must devise ways to support the South Sudanese people to address the drivers of conflict as we lay the foundation for longer-term peace and development.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the commitment of the entire United Nations family on the ground to work closely with the African Union, regional and international partners and, not the least, the people of South Sudan to make that vision a reality.

The President: I thank Ms. Løj for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: I thank you, Madam President, for this opportunity to brief the Security Council following my visit to South Sudan from 22 to 25 July. It was my first visit to South Sudan as the Emergency Relief Coordinator. My objective was to evaluate the humanitarian situation first-hand and to address critical concerns affecting our operations in South Sudan.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to meet with President Salva Kiir and the Minister for Cabinet Affairs, Mr. Elias Lomuro. I also met with Ambassadors from the region and with donor Member States. I also was able to visit civilians directly affected by the conflict in the Juba protection-of-civilians site, as well as those in Bentiu and Nyal in southern Unity state. I witnessed the consequences of over 20 months of brutal conflict on the lives of men, women and children. It was a very deeply harrowing experience.

The overall humanitarian situation continues to sharply deteriorate. As of today, over 2.2 million people have been displaced due to the conflict, an increase of 200,000 since the beginning of this year. More than 1.6 million are displaced internally and over 616,000 people have fled to neighbouring States. Almost 200,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are now seeking refuge in United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) bases, as compared to 121,000 just four months ago. Severe food insecurity is affecting 4.6 million people this year, as compared to 3.8 million at the height of the lean season last year. While the World Food Programme (WFP) and its partners have reached more than 2.3 million in 2015, severe hunger will be a threat well into next year, especially if fighting continues. There is no doubt that we will continue to see higher than usual food insecurity in the

conflict-affected states. In those states, displacement, the inability to plant crops now and the destruction of livelihoods has just been too severe and has left people unable to meet their own most basic needs. Host communities, such as those in Nyal as I saw, are generously giving up their own resilience to those to whom they are giving sanctuary as they flee or die and wade through the currently saturated chest-high swamps to safety, however temporary, before the fighting again catches up with them.

The lives of more than a quarter million children are at risk from rapidly worsening malnutrition. In half of South Sudan's states, one in three children suffers acute malnutrition. The situation for children in the protection-of-civilians sites is particularly concerning. UNICEF reports that global acute malnutrition is higher inside the Bentiu protection-of-civilians site, at 12.9 per cent, than for new arrivals, at 1.6 per cent, which could be attributed to overstretched basic services and outbreaks of disease that can contribute to malnutrition. Large spikes in malaria across South Sudan have also raised the possibility of a second consecutive season with exceptionally high numbers of malaria cases and preventable deaths, which, as we know, particular affect children under 5 and pregnant mothers.

The situation is particularly alarming in areas directly affected by armed conflict, in particular in Unity and the Upper Nile states. I was able to see that for myself during my visit to Bentiu and Nyal. I am very concerned about the atrocities that continue to be reported. The scope and level of cruelty that has characterized the attacks against civilians suggests a depth of antipathy that goes beyond political differences. Allegations include rampant killing, rape, abduction, looting, arson and forced displacement, and even such horrific acts as burning of people inside their own homes. There is evidence of deliberate ethnic targeting of, and reprisals against, women and girls. According to information received from Unity state, hundreds of women and girls have been abducted, and hundreds more have been subjected to sexual violence, including gang rape. For example, a survivor from Koch county reported how she was dragged out of her tukul and gang-raped alongside her neighbour by Government soldiers in front of her 3-year-old child. In another instance, a witness from Rubkona county said that she saw Government forces gang-raping a breast-feeding mother after tossing her baby aside.

Those who can flee from the unspeakable violence hide in the hard-to-reach swamp lands, while some others make the long journey by foot to the Bentiu protection-of-civilians site in search of safety. In Nyal, I met many women and children who had been separated from their husbands and other family members. One woman had just arrived after walking for several days from close to Leer with her seven children to seek safety among fellow Nuer in Nyal. The host community in Nyal was very welcoming, but the food and resources they were sharing with those arriving were running quite low. While insecurity has made it difficult for humanitarian staff to maintain a presence in southern Unity state, we are making all possible efforts to reach the displaced people, and host communities in urgent need of assistance. To further boost those efforts, I recently approved over $5 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for survival kits that contain food, seeds, mosquito nets and other essential items. We have reached over 33,000 people with the kits so far.

I am concerned about civilians being attacked at distribution sites in southern Unity state. We have had to halt the provision of assistance in some instances where people did not dare to come out of hiding to receive life-saving aid. The attacks are inhumane and illegal, and the international community should reiterate its call on all parties to the conflict to meet their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect civilians.

While needs are increasing, our ability to reach people in a timely manner is hampered by severe restrictions. During my visit, I was able to discuss the ban on barge movement on the Nile and the use of Malakal Airport with President Kiir and Minister Lomuro. I am pleased that the Government of South Sudan then moved to lift those restrictions at the beginning of August, but I remain deeply concerned about access restrictions to neighbouring Wau Shilluk from Malakal. More than 16,000 people have arrived in the Malakal protection-of-civilians site since mid-July, primarily because humanitarian assistance to Wau Shilluk has stopped. Humanitarian staff are still being prevented from delivering aid to Wau Shilluk from Malakal, but they have at least been able to fly in aid from Juba, reaching 20,000 so far. That is neither cost-effective nor the best way to ensure that all needs are met. We therefore need to continue to call on authorities to facilitate the safe, rapid and unimpeded access of

humanitarian organizations and supplies to all persons in need of assistance within South Sudan, in line with international humanitarian law.

I am very concerned about the security of humanitarian workers in South Sudan. At least 29 humanitarian workers have been killed since the beginning of the conflict, including, sadly, the recent confirmation of the three WFP workers. Many more have been wounded or abducted, and they have often been ethnically targeted. There has also been a worrying trend of robberies of non-governmental organization compounds in Juba, with 24 such robberies in July alone. That is unacceptable. I raised that concern in my meetings with the Government of South Sudan, but I again wish to recall parties' obligations to protect and respect humanitarian personnel and supplies.

Despite the increasingly difficult operating environment, I am glad to report that in 2015 humanitarian workers have so far reached more than 2.3 million people with food and livelihood assistance, and more than 1.6 million people with water, sanitation and hygiene services. Health workers have seen more than 1.1 million patients in conflict-affected states, and more than half a million people have received critical items, such as tarpaulins, blankets and cooking sets, while more than 200,000 children have been provided with child-friendly spaces. The cholera outbreak, which resulted in 1,644 cases and 45 deaths, has been largely contained. Challenges remain, including the need to scale up the response fast enough to meet the ever-increasing needs, especially in places such as the Bentiu and Malakal protection-of-civilian sites, where people continue to arrive by the hundreds on a daily basis.

To help address the humanitarian challenges I have mentioned, I believe the international community should address the following four priority areas.

First and foremost, the people of South Sudan are looking for lasting peace. A first step would be a credible cessation of hostilities, which would give people breathing space and allow humanitarian workers to deliver assistance to those currently cut off from life-saving aid by insecurity. As a second step, a durable peace agreement would allow people to consider returning home and rebuilding their lives. But we must be realistic: a peace agreement that is not inclusive and does not bring an end to the fighting will ultimately fail the people of South Sudan.

Secondly, the call on the parties to the conflict to protect civilians must be reinforced. Over the past four months alone, and despite the best efforts of UNMISS and humanitarians, an untold number of civilians, among them many women and children, have died cruel deaths, were wounded or lost their livelihoods. The Government needs to do more to protect civilians and prevent or stop violations of international humanitarian law. While we work towards peace, we must ensure that, even if current developments lead to a political change, the United Nations continues to put protection at the centre of its focus as well. We also need to put an end to the prevailing impunity for violations of international humanitarian law committed by all parties to the conflict and for violations and abuses of human rights law.

Thirdly, anyone with influence on the parties should ensure that humanitarian response efforts are not impeded and that all South Sudanese in need of assistance can be reached in a principled and cost-effective manner. Continued pressure and action on the parties to the conflict to abide by their commitments is crucial.

Finally, we need adequate funding for the humanitarian operation. Only half of the requirements of the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan have so far been met. I am concerned that, without timely and sustainable funding, we will not be able to deliver on our promise to enable the people of South Sudan to realize their basic right to be safe and to live with dignity and free from want.

The President: I thank Mr. O'Brien for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Barros Melet.

Mr. Barros Melet (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to brief the members of the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015), concerning South Sudan, and to highlight the main findings of the interim report of the Panel of Experts (see S/2015/656), based on the Coordinator's presentation of the report and the Committee's deliberations on 20 August, as well as the work of the Committee and Panel since my previous briefing in the Chamber, on 14 May (see S/PV.7444).

On 31 July, the Panel of Experts conveyed its interim report to members of the Committee. In its report, the Panel observed that, since the adoption of

resolution 2206 (2015), the situation in South Sudan had deteriorated precipitously, posing a significant threat not only to the country's citizens but also to the peace and security of the entire region. In the light of such severe deterioration, the Panel recommended that, in order to achieve the objectives set forth in resolution 2206 (2015) and alter the expectations of the warring parties, designations undertaken by the Committee must include those decision-makers with the ability to either perpetuate or end the war, as well as those who benefit economically and politically from conflict and others who are responsible for serious crimes under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

The Panel also observed that the supply of arms and ammunition to all parties in the conflict had contributed to prolonging and escalating the war. In that connection, it recommended that the Security Council impose a complete and general arms embargo on South Sudan. The Panel reported on the procurement of heavy weaponry by the Government — particularly the acquisition of greater air, riverine and land mobility capacity — which would allow Government forces to overcome the logistical challenges of the rainy season and continue fighting in the coming months, thereby substantially impacting the dynamics on the ground.

The Panel noted that the humanitarian situation in South Sudan was one of only four level-3 system-wide emergencies in the world, and the only one in Africa. The Panel also reported that the obstruction of humanitarian assistance and of peacekeeping operations had escalated since the adoption of resolution 2206 (2015); that humanitarian workers and United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) personnel, alike, were regularly attacked, assaulted, harassed, detained, intimidated and threatened; and that, in May, humanitarian actors had reported the same number of access-related incidents as the preceding two months combined.

The Panel reported that all parties to the conflict had been targeting civilians as part of their military tactics, thereby contravening applicable international humanitarian law, as referenced to in resolution 2206 (2015). The Panel asserted that, since the offensive in the greater Upper Nile region began in April, the intensity and brutality of the violence aimed at civilians were hitherto unseen, even in what had already been, without a doubt, an exceedingly violent conflict. The Panel further reported that scores of civilians had been killed, maimed, tortured, burned alive inside their homes, displaced, raped and abducted, and that children had been recruited and used as part of the war effort. The Panel indicated that it was investigating the chain of command pertaining to those serious crimes.

In that regard, the Panel recommended that, following its presidential statement of 24 March (S/PRST/2015/9), the Security Council urge the African Union to publicly release the report of its commission of inquiry on South Sudan without further delay and independent of the outcome of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development process, as that would provide insight regarding those responsible for the violations.

During the Committee meeting on 20 August, the Coordinator of the Panel noted that, by every measure, the situation in South Sudan had deteriorated further since the Panel submitted its interim report to the Committee. He reported that no area of South Sudan remained unaffected by conflict and that the war continued to metastasize and manifest beyond the areas of most intense fighting between Government and Opposition forces in the states of the Greater Upper Nile region. The Coordinator also stated that developments in recent days, including President's Kiir's dismissal of the Governors of Central and Eastern Equatoria states and the arrest and detention of the latter, had exacerbated an already volatile situation, further fuelling a brewing insurgency in those areas.

On the humanitarian situation, the Coordinator stated that over 70 per cent of the country's 12 million people now required humanitarian assistance according to the latest United Nations figures. Food insecurity remains at emergency levels — the second most-severe level just short of famine — in widespread areas of the Greater Upper Nile region. The Coordinator reported that just under 200,000 internally displaced persons were now sheltering in United Nations protection-of-civilian sites, up nearly 40,000 since mid-July — that is a one third increase in just over a month.

The Coordinator also noted that the deterioration in the economic situation was commensurate with that of the security and humanitarian situation, and that the Panel had begun investigating the financing channels used by individuals in both the Government and the Opposition, with a view to prosecuting war crimes and the individuals and entities that were profiting from the continuation of the conflict.

The Coordinator observed that the Panel had taken note of the fact that the outcome of 17 August was only the most recent of at least a dozen times since early 2014 that one or both parties had failed to adhere to an internationally endorsed deadline for progress towards ending the war. He expressed the view of the Panel of Experts that, should all the parties sign an agreement, the prevailing issue would be not only the implementation of that agreement and an end to the violence, but also the promotion of national reconciliation and a durable and inclusive political settlement for South Sudan, which would include ensuring accountability for serious crimes committed throughout the war. In the opinion of the Coordinator, the role envisioned for sanctions in resolution 2206 (2015) in order to achieve an inclusive and sustainable peace in South Sudan will be just as critical, if not more so, during that period than it is today.

The Coordinator also underscored the Panel of Experts' recommendation that, in so far as resolution 2206 (2015) reiterates that there is no military solution to the conflict and the reported acquisitions and attempts to change the balance of power on the ground decrease the incentives for a solution to the violence — incentives that are necessary not only for an agreement but for adherence and implementation thereof, including adherence to a ceasefire — makes it necessary for the Council to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan.

In their deliberations concerning the Panel of Experts' interim report on South Sudan, most delegations welcomed the report and its recommendations. Some delegations did not support the recommendation concerning the report of the African Union' commission of inquiry on South Sudan. One delegation stressed the need to further study the recommendation on the imposition of an arms embargo, and did not support the recommendation on options for criminal accountability and transitional justice in South Sudan.

The Committee took note of the only recommendation of the Secretariat, namely, that it consider the possibility of additional designations of individuals and — given the severe deterioration on the ground and the threat that the war in South Sudan poses to international peace and security and to achieve the objectives established by the Council in resolution 2206 (2215), namely, inclusive and sustainable peace in South Sudan — that such designations include those decision-makers who have the capability either to perpetuate or end the war, but who reap the economic and political benefits of the conflict, and/or others, who are responsible for serious crimes under international humanitarian law and human rights law.

Since my previous briefing in the Chamber on 14 May, the Committee held an exchange of views on 22 May with the Panel of Experts regarding its work plan and methodology. On 19 June, the Committee held its second formal meeting with the representatives of South Sudan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda on the implementation of resolution 2206 (2015). In their remarks, the participating States of the region highlighted a number of challenges in implementing the sanctions measures, such as porous borders, and expressed concern with regard to the deteriorating humanitarian and security situation in South Sudan.

On 26 June, the Panel of Experts submitted its first monthly report pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015). Committee members look forward to receiving the next monthly report, at the end of this month, and to maintaining close, continuous engagement with the Panel over the course of its mandate. On 1 July, the Committee approved the inclusion of six individuals on the list making them subject to the travel ban and assets freeze set out respectively in paragraphs 9 and 12 of resolution 2206 (2015).

As I mentioned under the item "Other matters" during the Committee's consultations on 20 August, I plan to visit South Sudan during the month of November, and will inform members of the Committee of the details of my planned visit in due course.

In conclusion, I would like to assure members of the Council that, as Chair of the Committee, I will do my utmost to ensure that the Committee makes a significant contribution to the efforts of the Council, UNMISS and other international partners to bring an end to the ongoing violence that threatens South Sudan and to set the country on a path of reconciliation, durable peace and sustainable development.

The President: I thank Ambassador Barros Melet for his briefing.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7512

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7512th meeting
Wednesday, 26 August 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Stehelin
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Ms. Chan Shum

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2015/624)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2015/624)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Bernardino León, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to welcome Mr. León, who is joining us today via video teleconference from Paris.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/624, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

I now give the floor to Mr. León.

Mr. León: The members of the Security Council have before them the latest report (S/2015/624) of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, which details the work of the Mission over the past five months. The report paints a mixed picture of evolving security dynamics in Libya. A year since the country's most serious outbreak of armed hostilities and the disruption to the political process, local communities in western Libya are increasingly taking the lead in ceasefire and reconciliation initiatives between different towns and cities, thus contributing to a marked reduction in military tensions across that part of the country and the wider Tripoli area. That is in stark contrast to security dynamics elsewhere in the country.

Fifteen months since the start of military operations in Benghazi, in the east, it is clear that the confrontations between the parties have gradually transformed into a war of trenches, with no imminent end foreseen. In the interim, the status quo is exacting a heavy toll on the civilian population and on whatever remains of the city's much-damaged infrastructure. More than 100,000 of Benghazi's population remain internally displaced, and 70 per cent of the city's health facilities are either inaccessible or not functioning.

The situation in the south is equally appalling. The absence of the State and of a proper functioning security apparatus has exacerbated local competition among tribal groups for power and resources — a conflict that has its roots in decades-long marginalization and neglect by central authorities.

At the national level, the scale of human suffering is staggering for a country with large oil reserves and strong economic potential. According to different United Nations agencies, an estimated 1.9 million people require urgent humanitarian assistance to meet their basic health-care needs. Access to food is now a major problem for some 1.2 million people, mostly in Benghazi and the east. The number of internally displaced persons across Libya now stands at approximately 435,000. The health-care system is on the verge of collapse, with many hospitals across the country overcrowded and operating at severely reduced capacity, and many reporting acute shortages of medicines, vaccines and medical equipment. Power cuts are endemic in many areas of the country. Some neighbourhoods, such as in Benghazi, are enduring electricity cuts almost around the clock.

Close to 250,000 migrants are estimated to be in the country or transiting through it, many of them facing significant protection issues, including arbitrary arrest and detention in abusive conditions, sexual abuse, forced labour, exploitation and extortion. This year alone, more than 2,000 migrants have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, the vast majority in a desperate bid to make the sea crossing from Libya to Europe's southern shores.

At the same time, the country's economy continues to contract rapidly, the result of a significant reduction in oil revenues due to falling oil prices and low oil production from Libya's oilfields. Libya's financial reserves are also being heavily depleted, in large part as the result of unsustainable expenditures on non-productive items. The political-institutional crisis in the country has also manifested itself in growing

competition over key financial and other sovereign institutions.

Against that grim backdrop of growing hardship and misery stemming from deteriorating security and general lawlessness, widespread violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law continue with impunity across the country. Armed groups from all sides continue to abduct civilians on account of their political opinions or identity, often in the hope of exchanging them in return for a ransom or for the release of fighters or other civilians taken by rival groups. Not even humanitarian aid workers have been spared.

Permit me to use this platform to reiterate my call on all sides in the conflict to undertake the necessary steps to protect civilians from direct and indiscriminate attacks, facilitate their evacuation and allow unimpeded and safe access to humanitarian aid. I also wish to remind all parties of their obligations to end all forms of arbitrary detention and to protect all those detained from torture or other ill-treatment. While we welcome the release of some of the illegally detained persons, we continue to urge all parties to do more to complete that process as soon as possible.

When I last briefed the Council, in mid-July (see S/PV.7485), I spoke of the fact that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, or Daesh, had asserted control of the strategically located city of Sirte, in central Libya. That control has now been extended to a stretch of coastline covering more than 200 kilometres east and west of Sirte. Despite an attempt on 11 August by local armed groups to dislodge Daesh from Sirte, its fighters regained control of the city three days later. The casualty figures are difficult to confirm, but witnesses report that Daesh has carried out brutal revenge attacks on its opponents. There can be no doubt that the danger that Daesh poses to Libya and the Libyan people is real, imminent and palpable. Libyan security and military actors, as well as political stakeholders on both sides of the divide, are fully cognizant of the danger posed by Daesh-affiliated militants. However, they must recognize that no strategy aimed at containing, if not eliminating, the Daesh threat can be viable unless it is part of a concerted, unified and coordinated effort that brings all Libyans together under a single banner whose allegiance is to the Libyan State and to a Government that is inclusive and representative of all Libyans. The message to Libya's leaders is clear. There is simply no alternative to unified and collective action if Libyans are to succeed in preventing a repeat of the catastrophic advances that Daesh has made in countries such as Syria and Iraq.

After my last briefing, in which I updated the Council on progress being made in the Libyan political dialogue process, I reconvened the main dialogue track for a new round of talks held in Geneva on 11 and 12 August. The two-day talks focused primarily on ways of expediting the dialogue process ahead of the critical deadline of 21 October, the date on which the mandate of the House of Representatives could end, according to the constitutional declaration. Although the General National Congress in Tripoli, unlike other dialogue participants, did not initial the main text of the Libyan Political Agreement on 11 July, I am confident that their concerns can be addressed in the ongoing discussions on the annexes to the Agreement, including those pertaining to the formation of a Government of national accord.

Seven months after the United Nations Support Mission in Libya launched the Libyan political dialogue process, I am increasingly confident that the process is finally reaching its final stages. It has been a difficult and challenging process, but one that has proved increasingly resilient, despite repeated attempts by spoilers from all sides whose narrow interests and agendas militate against a peaceful solution to the conflict in Libya. The fact that a majority of stakeholders have sought to engage in the different tracks is a reassuring sign of the grassroots support that the dialogue process has gradually acquired from various segments of the Libyan population. The talks have made a lot of progress in narrowing the deficit of trust that exists among Libya's political stakeholders and in forging agreement on a road map that lays out a vision for bringing a rapid end to the political crisis and military conflict that have ravaged Libya for more than a year. Overcoming the country's political polarization and divisiveness will be no easy task. We should not underestimate the magnitude of the challenges or the resources that will be needed to pull Libya back from the brink of economic meltdown and a total collapse of State institutions. Most important will be the determination and commitment of Libyans themselves, and specifically of their political leaders, if Libya is to safeguard its national unity and territorial integrity and spare its people the scourge of long-term civil strife and instability.

I would like to urge the leaderships of both the House of Representatives and the General National Congress not to squander the historic and unique opportunity before them to be peacemakers. I appeal to them not to waste the hard work they have invested over the past seven months in order to arrive at the point where they are today. The agreement they have negotiated may not be perfect, but it is a fair and reasonable one, in which the only winners are the Libyan people. I would also like to reiterate that the United Nations, along with the international community, will remain steadfast in its commitment and support to Libya's democratic process. Any attempt to derail the political process by undemocratic means should not be tolerated. The dialogue process remains the only credible and legitimate mechanism by which Libyans can safeguard the continuity of the democratic process in their country. Time is running out. The onus is on Libya's leaders on all sides and at all levels to make that final push towards peace.

As Libya's dialogue process enters its final phase, I wish to thank the members of the Council for their support for my mediation efforts and to reiterate my sincere and profound gratitude and appreciation to the Libyan people and their representatives, as well as to the various Member States and regional organizations that have supported the dialogue process. In particular, I would like to thank Algeria, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Qatar, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the African Union, the European Union and the League of Arab States. The collective effort and determination of the international community will be vital to articulating a clear strategy for the delivery of technical assistance. It is equally important that the international community move quickly to present a clearly articulated strategy in support of the Libyan State and the efforts by a Government of national accord to contain and eliminate the threat that groups such as Daesh pose not only to the stability of Libya but also to regional and international security.

The President: I thank Mr. León for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Dabbashi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would first like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to thank Mr. Bernardino León, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his briefing on the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/624) and for the additional information he has given us.

It is clear that Libya is now experiencing the most critical phase to date of its modern history. Libya's very existence as a united, independent and sovereign State is threatened due to the greed and whims of its children and the conspiracy that certain countries promote for their own purposes. It is also due to terrorism, which does not even believe in the existence of Libya except as a State that finances a multinational entity — one where the faithful are beheaded or crucified, the law of the jungle rules and the devil is the leader. Undeniably, the Secretary-General's report before the Council highlights some of the dimensions of that very gloomy picture. Despite all that, we still hope that Libya will be saved by its own people.

The Libyan people have recently begun to feel that the country's crisis can be settled. However, such optimism is linked to the formation of a Government of national accord and reconciliation. Such a Government must count on a minimum of knowledge, including about the management of State affairs. It must be familiar with the rules of good governance and be able to communicate effectively with all parties. At the same time, experts harbour doubts as to the success of forming such a Government because of the absence of criteria to be met for the selection of its members — a view quite different from public opinion. That is why the roles of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and of the Security Council are vitally important at this stage, as they must guide the participants in the political dialogue so that they can work to set aside the failures of the past four years. The ultimate goal should be to choose new leadership for the country that is free from partisan and personal interests. The progress achieved in the political dialogue thus far has been an undeniable success, which could provide the foundation for peace and security during the remaining transitional period before adoption of the constitution.

However, that success could vanish owing to the intransigence of a particular party that is obstructing the process, a party we are all familiar with that does not respect the future of Libya or the lives of Libyans as long as it has enough weapons and foreign support to block consensus. That is why Libyans await a firm position from Mr. Bernardino León and from the Security Council so that they can put an end to the procrastination and futile, deliberate delays that are or could be adopted by a party to the dialogue. Libyans

want to work towards a Government of national accord and to create the necessary conditions so that it can begin its work from the capital, Tripoli, as soon as possible.

However, the formation of such a Government is not the end of the process, because it would perhaps be a Government that is not better than previous Governments. But the direct engagement of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to provide support in establishing State institutions and offer advice on good governance could change that. Such support could serve to improve the performance of the Government and allow it to diffuse the current crisis in Libya. The Security Council must also be ready to take all the necessary measures to help the Government to extend its control over all of Libya's territory and to fight extremist groups that resist disarmament when the time comes.

I would like to draw the Council's attention to the fact that all efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General could be futile if we do not clearly define the map of terrorism in Libya and if we do not identify the sponsors of terrorism as terrorists who provide weapons. I say that because paragraph 81 of the Secretary-General's report shows that the situation on the ground is critical. There is currently a ceasefire in Benghazi, now that the city hosts the largest terrorist force in Libya, which is resisting army operations to free the city from terrorism and to guarantee the return of its citizens.

A few days ago, some described Derna as being a place free from terrorism, a free city. The city is in fact occupied by Al-Qaida, which has been the case since the adoption of resolution 1970 (2011). I visited Derna in January 2012, during which I noticed that public State institutions were not flying the Libyan national flag. I believe that is still the case, as Al-Qaida has not changed its tactics to date. For the past six months, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), or Daesh, has controlled Derna with the support of Al-Qaida. There remain differences when it comes to the respective interests of the two groups, but Al-Qaida has taken over Derna. We all know that the sole difference between Al-Qaida and ISIL is the nature of their respective criminal activities. Members of the Council should know, if they do not already, that the scope of the danger posed by Al-Qaida in Libya goes beyond the danger posed by ISIL: whereas ISIL terrorists are present in specific, limited areas of the country, members of Al-Qaida are found in many parts of Libya and call themselves rebels and revolutionaries. Unfortunately, that terrorist group has manipulated a great number of young people who have joined them in their fight without really knowing the reality of the group. I am convinced that Al-Qaida is going to return to the forefront and put up ferocious resistance once it believes it is to be disarmed.

I hope that all States will have a very clear position when choosing between support for the Libyan people or support for terrorists, regardless of their names.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7513

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7513th meeting
Thursday, 27 August 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramirez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/651)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) (S/2015/651)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/651, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014).

I now give the floor to Mr. O'Brien.

Mr. O'Brien: Since the conflict began, over a quarter of a million people have been killed in Syria and more than 1 million have been injured. Some 7.6 million people have been displaced inside the country. Over 1 million people have had to leave their homes this year alone. Over 4 million people have fled across borders in a desperate search of survival and a future, placing host countries and communities under pressure — and now stretched to the breaking point. We may all be living on borrowed time. In the name of both security as well as humanity, we need to find a better, more sustainable way forward for the wider international community to share the burden in hosting Syrian refugees.

Over the past month, violence has continued to escalate across the country. Indiscriminate and targeted attacks by all parties to the conflict have resulted in loss of life and the destruction of infrastructure. In addition, access to basic services, such as water, has been denied to hundreds of thousands of Syrians.

On 12 and 16 August, Government airstrikes hit a market place in Duma, killing over 100 people and injuring many more. The attack took place just a few days after the indiscriminate shelling of Damascus by non-State armed groups. Despite the outrage and condemnations, there has since been at least one further similar attack. According to reports, since mid-August, approximately 200 people have been killed and 400 injured in eastern Al-Ghutah. The shelling of Damascus has also continued, reportedly killing over 30 people on 23 and 24 August. That tit-for-tat approach by the warring parties is causing devastation to the ordinary women, men and children of Syria, and it must stop.

The parties' callous disregard for human life and for basic survival seemingly knows no bounds. In early July, barrel bombs reportedly hit a shelter in the village of Al-Hawash, in Hama, killing five civilians. In Aleppo governorate, an alliance of armed groups, including the designated terrorist group the Al-Nusra Front, launched attacks on Government-controlled areas of Aleppo city, reportedly killing more than 30 civilians. Attacks on civilians are unlawful and unacceptable, and they must stop. I appeal to every party engaged in violence and fighting to protect civilians. All parties involved in violations of international humanitarian law must be held to account.

The destruction of civilian infrastructure continued over the reporting period. Non-State armed groups and designated terrorist groups deliberately cut access to essential services such as water and electricity. Such acts violate international humanitarian law and must be stopped immediately.

In Aleppo city, the water supply was cut from 2 to 18 July and again in early August — during the hottest months of the year — affecting an estimated 1.7 million people. Similarly, in Dar'a city and the surrounding villages, active fighting disrupted the supply of water and electricity for more than 10 days, affecting some 300,000 people. The city of Damascus was also affected by water disruptions, as non-State armed groups cut off the supply from the Wadi Barada springs, which provide water to Damascus. It is unconscionable to make anyone live under such conditions.

Despite the increasingly challenging environment, millions of people continue to receive lifesaving assistance using all available modalities, including across borders, pursuant to resolution 2165 (2014). During the first half of 2015, United Nations agencies

and non-governmental organizations provided food assistance for 5.9 million people on average per month, medicine and supplies for 9 million people, water and sanitation support for over 5 million people, and basic relief items for more than 4 million people.

While these numbers are significant, I regret to say that many more could be reached should unimpeded access be allowed. I am particularly concerned about the severely limited access to the 4.6 million people living in hard-to-reach and besieged areas. During the first half of 2015, each month the United Nations only reached 12 per cent of people in hard-to-reach areas with food, and 3.4 per cent with health supplies, which indicates major access challenges that limit the humanitarian community's ability to reach the most vulnerable and affected people in Syria.

Similarly, parties to the conflict continue to severely restrict access to besieged areas. Each month of the first half of this year, the United Nations managed to reach less than 1 per cent with food and non-food items, and 2 per cent with health supplies. In July, no food or other type of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations reached any besieged areas through official routes where some 422,000 people are located.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was able to access Yalda on 18 August, and again on 19 and 24 August, as well as today, to provide lifesaving health-care consultations for 1,000 people, and 200,000 water purification tablets. However, much more is needed, and I remain extremely concerned about the situation of Palestine refugees in Syria.

During my visit to Syria, I discussed with senior Government representatives the need to strengthen the protection of civilians and the overall humanitarian response. I urged the Government to grant full and unhindered access to all people in need wherever they may be located. It is my sincere hope that the necessary steps will be taken towards improving access, including approving requests for inter-agency and agency convoys.

I welcome the recent granting of the visas for United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs staff that had been pending for months. And with respect to visas, I have also just this minute received news from the Syrian Mission that the 47 pending visas for United Nations staff are going to be granted, following the specific request I made during my visit. We will seek official confirmation later today on this matter. I also welcome initial reports on the reduction in time to obtain approvals to import humanitarian supplies.

I also visited the Old City of Homs. I was utterly shocked to see the destruction that four years of fighting had brought about. Almost every home had been completely destroyed. I met with affected families and was able to hear their stories. I spoke with a man called Ahmed who told me his harrowing tale. Above all, he said, he wanted peace in his country. Despite the destruction and daily challenges, he and his family are glad to have been able to return to their home at last; they were among the first to do so. I will be travelling to Turkey and Jordan in September, where I will be able to see for myself the ongoing response efforts to meet the needs of the refugees and of the communities hosting them.

It is difficult to find words that would justly describe the depth of suffering that Syrians face on a daily basis. Having just returned from the country, I have seen a glimpse of this grim reality myself. I left the country deeply saddened and outraged by the needless and immense suffering of ordinary Syrians and the abhorrent destruction the conflict has wrought on the country. I am angry because we as the international community are not allowed, or able, to do more to protect Syrians who more than ever need our unfaltering support.

But I come away determined not to give up, not to be exasperated by the relentless repetitiveness of the challenges we as humanitarians face and the need to explore every avenue to do everything possible to provide lifesaving aid and protection to the people in need. I urge Council members to do everything in their power to end this crisis. With all the will in the world, humanitarian action cannot be a substitute for political action. The Council must exert leadership to push for a political solution.

The President: I thank Mr. O'Brien for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to take this opportunity to express my country's warm welcome to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. I

wish him complete success as he carries out the noble tasks he has set out to fulfil at this very difficult time.

This is a time of extremism and violence resulting in unprecedented levels of crime and very challenging humanitarian conditions in many countries. It is a time in which terrorism is being fuelled by the policy failures of several Governments. The victims are all our peoples. This terrorism is destroying our civilization and cultural heritage, just as it has done in many cities across Iraq. Recently, in Tadmor, Syria, terrorists destroyed the historic Temple of Bel-Shamin and killed one of Syria's most preeminent antiquities experts, Mr. Khaled Al-Asaad.

We consider Mr. O'Brien's visit in Syria, with his meetings and interviews with Syrian authorities, including in his visit to Homs, to be a greatly welcome preamble to putting things on the right path and strengthening our transparency in cooperating with the United Nations in the humanitarian context. We are comfortable with Mr. O'Brien's ideas on improving cooperation between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Syria. We expect those exchanges and discussions to remain ongoing for the benefit of Syria and its people.

In that regard, I would note that the Syrian Government will continue to cooperate with the United Nations to facilitate access to humanitarian assistance for all of its citizens victims of the crisis, wherever they are, in line with United Nations principles relating to humanitarian assistance in emergency situations, pursuant to resolution 46/182 of the General Assembly and taking into account Syria's sovereignty and territorial unity and integrity as well as the plans agreed with the Syrian Government.

This cooperation by the Syrian Government is only part of the overall humanitarian situation in Syria, which is dire as a result of foreign military interference in the country. That interference is the reason for the increase, fuelling and continuation of the phenomenon of terrorism in Syria and the region. It is also why progress has slowed on the political track. Therefore, foreign interference is the main reason for the emergence and prolongation of the humanitarian crisis being experienced in some parts of Syria. It is why we have been unable to make genuine, tangible and lasting improvements to the humanitarian situation. We will be unable to do so without putting an end to this blatant foreign interference in our economic, social and military affairs, or without ending the manifestations of support for terrorism, which is hindering progress on the political track and imposing obligatory measures on the Syrian people. In no region can human suffering be brought to an end solely by humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, we are aware of the need for such assistance, which plays a major role in alleviating the suffering of our people. Developments have shown just how sound our reasoning is.

Despite all the humanitarian efforts undertaken, Syrians have not emerged from the crisis and from suffering. Refugees and persons displaced by terrorism have been unable to return to their homes and their daily lives. Peace and security have not been provided for the people and their children, except in the regions liberated by the Government and the Syrian army where peace and security were re-established after routing terrorists and where local and national reconciliation has taken place. That shows once again that Syrians are capable of talking to each other and solving their problems by themselves if foreign intervention ceases and if the Governments that protect terrorists commit themselves to end their bloody policies.

One, including members of the Security Council, cannot continue to hide behind what some are calling the moderate military opposition, which merely provides an excuse to use terrorists and extremists as ways and means to carry out their political agenda in Syria and other States. Those terrorist activities have been exposed to everyone: witness the so-called Jaish Al-Islam, which is linked to Saudia Arabia and is continuing to indiscriminately bomb the capital Damascus, which we are glad Mr. O'Brien mentioned; or the Jaish Al-Fatha, which is linked to Turkey and Qatar and is contituing to bomb Aleppo and Idlib; while the Jaish Al-Yarmouk, linked to Jordan and Israel, is destroying southern Syria. The question here is: Is the indiscriminate bombing of civilians in Damascus and Aleppo a practice of the moderate opposition? Between 23 and 24 August, such "moderate" opposition launched 92 mortars and missiles against Damascus, killing and injuring many civilians.

It is ironic that some members of the Security Council preach the protection of the Syrian people while they remain silent about those crimes — offering no condemnation and holding no emergency meeting to reject those acts. An exception, for which I am grateful, was the Council statement concerning what happened in the city of Palmyra/Tadmor, as was the case when water

was cut off from Damascus and Aleppo for weeks by a "moderate" military opposition that considers its tactics of killing, torture and slavery as acts of moderation and as a peaceful path to achieve democracy and freedom.

Why give legal standing and legitimacy to the moderate military opposition in Syria alone, and not in any other State? Why are we alone targeted with this invention of so-called moderate military opposition, while at the same time we are witnessing a campaign in the Western media to promote armed groups that have pledged allegience to Al-Qaida, such as the terrorist group Harakat Ahrar Al-Sham, which *The New York Times* has often commended, as in yesterday's issue, which I have with me here, as an "Ideal Syrian ally for [the] U.S."?

The bombing, which is targeting civilians in many cities in Syria, prompts me to refer to Syria's constitutional obligations and responsibilities to protect its citizens from terrorism and extremism. Many have accused the Syrian Government of targeting civilians in Duma and other cities. Like any other responsible Government in the world, including the members of the Security Council, we cannot sit by when terrorists target our civilians, as happens in Aleppo, Damascus and other Syrian cities. We have to respond to the source of the firing and shelling by the terrorists. As such, the Syrian army is acting in accordance with international law to combat terrorism and protect its civilians. This is not about attacking civilians, as some delegations falsely claim. Those who are killing civilians are those who are using them as human shields in Duma and other cities in Syria. As the Council is aware, that is similar to what Boko Haram is doing in Nigeria and neighbouring States.

Once again, the Secretary-General's report (S/2015/651) includes several gaps and erroneous information. As we have sent identical letters to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General on this issue, I will limit myself today to simply noting that there were 48 requests presented by the United Nations for access by humanitarian assistance convoys from 1 January to 30 June. Approval was granted in connection with 43 of those requests, not the mere 20 referred to in the report. Meanwhile, the United Nations has yet to avail itself of 10 of the approvals granted in April and June.

I would also like to point out that the Syrian Government has agreed to allow the entry of certain assistance to the cities of Harasta and Duma, Damascus governorate, as well as into Al-Fu'ah and Kafriya, Idlib governorate, and into all other areas where the situation is such that the security of humanitarian workers can be guaranteed. We are now considering several requests while taking into account various elements, including the security situation, in order to ensure access for humanitarian assistance to those who deserve it, and so that the assistance is not confiscated by terrorists. I would also like to say that, following Mr. O'Brien's visit to Syria, we approved all the requests for visas that were presented to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, including extending the visas of OCHA officials, which Mr. O'Brien did mention.

Lastly, there is an unacceptable legal violation in the Secretary-General's report with regard to the implementation of resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014). Erroneous information, which may even be called scandalous, was deployed in the report to refer to terrorist groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham/Daesh and Jabhat Al-Nusra as non-State armed groups. As everyone here knows, those, as well as other Al-Qaida-associated groups, have been classified by the Council as terrorist groups. We therefore cannot accept calling the terrorists in Syria non-State armed groups — an incorrect description that violates Security Council resolutions aimed at combating terrorism.

Finally, on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, I would like once again to warmly welcome Mr. O'Brien's resolve, as well as to express our willingness to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to successfully bring to fruition the noble goal of providing humanitarian assistance to those who deserve it.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.7514

Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7514th meeting
Friday, 28 August 2015, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Ogwu	(Nigeria)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
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	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Zhao Yong
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mr. Abdul Razak
	New Zealand	Mr. Taula
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Gasso Matoses
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization of and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2015/619)

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2015/626)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization of and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau (S/2015/619)

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2015/626)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Timor-Leste to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Miguel Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, and His Excellency Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Brazil.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/619, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the progress made with regard to the stabilization of and restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/626, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

I now give the floor to Mr. Trovoada.

Mr. Trovoada (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity afforded me to present to the Security Council the most recent report (S/2015/626) of the Secretary-General on the situation in Guinea Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS).

His Excellency the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. José Mário Vaz, who had planned to speak at this Council meeting, decided to resign owing to the recent political events in his country. Just a little over a year after the restoration of the constitutional order, Guinea-Bissau is again experiencing political turbulence, following the President's dismissal of the Government of Prime Minister Domingos Simões Pereira, on 12 August. On August 20, Mr. Baciro Djá, former Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the dismissed Government, was appointed Prime Minister by a presidential decree and was sworn in by the President on the same day. Before removing the Prime Minister, President Vaz sent a message to the nation in which he set forth his observations about the state of the country, the action of the executive power, the relations among the country's institutions, in general, and between himself and the Head of Government, in particular, and on the factors giving rise to a serious political crisis that, under the Constitution, could lead to the fall of the Government.

This is an unexpected situation, since the main institutions of the State, formed after the general elections of April and May 2014, are all from the same political family, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde. The party, whose statute states that, if the party wins the election, its leader will be the candidate for Prime Minister, now enjoys an absolute majority in Parliament. Moreover, the party chose among its leaders and presented as presidential candidate the current President of the country. The dismissed Government was inclusive, including almost all political parties represented in the People's National Assembly, which guaranteed that it had a comfortable base of parliamentary support. It therefore seemed that, a priori, the main conditions had been met to ensure a framework for political stability that was favourable to the proper functioning of the State. Upon the initiative of the Government, and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, a round table of Guinea-Bissau's cooperation partners was held in Brussels last March, the results of which have opened for the country the prospect of obtaining significant financial resources for the realization of its Strategic and Operational Plan 2015-2020.

In previous reports to the Security Council on Guinea-Bissau, it was always emphasized that stability in the country remained fragile because the underlying causes of the recurrent instability that undermined it had not been eradicated. Recently, the statements made in public by the State's highest officials gave rise to an impression that there was a climate of political tension that might lead to institutional failure if they did not seek to overcome their disagreements through dialogue. The absence of this essential dialogue left the way open to the heightening of mutual distrust and the deepening of antagonisms, ensuring that the country would arrive at the point where it is today.

In the exercise of the good offices mission of the Secretary-General that I lead locally in Guinea-Bissau in his name and as his representative, I maintain frequent contacts with Government entities at the highest levels and with the political class and the different components of civil society. Given the unfolding of current events, these contacts have been intensified in order to urge the parties concerned to favour dialogue as the most reliable tool to achieve a lasting solution to the conflict among them. I am pleased to note that representatives of the international community in Guinea-Bissau, both bilaterally and multilaterally, were mobilized and engaged in the same direction, making their voices heard in unison and calling for dialogue and an agreement in order to safeguard political stability and peace, so that the achievements of the return to democratic order and constitutional normality would not be called into question.

It is worth noting here the efforts made personally by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and by the President Macky Sall of Senegal and President Alpha Condé of Guinea, in their respective capacities as Chair of the Economic Community of West African States and that organization's mediator for Guinea-Bissau. I also wish to commend the positions of solidarity with the people of Guinea-Bissau expressed by the African Union, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the Peacebuilding Commission and its country-specific configuration for Guinea-Bissau, the presence of whose Chair, Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, I welcome, as well as the many other organizations and friendly countries that voiced concern about the current crisis and expressed their hope that Guinea-Bissau would rise to the stability challenge and continue without upheavals on the path towards economic development and progress. The Council has also closely followed the situation through briefings, after which it has made public statements in support of dialogue and consultation.

Before concluding, I would like to make three observations about the political situation in Guinea-Bissau.

First, the political parties and all those who have a role to play in resolving this crisis are proclaiming their firm determination to democratically defend their rights and their legitimacy in the context of strict respect for the Constitution and the law. Secondly, the demonstrations that have taken place so far have been peaceful, orderly and without any clashes or violence. Thirdly, during a meeting I had with the Chief of the General Staff, including the commanders of the three branches of the armed forces, the military strongly affirmed that it was determined to remain completely outside the political scene and observe a republican attitude of submission to civil authority and obedience to the Constitution and the democratic institutions of the State.

The international community, which has always supported Guinea-Bissau in the course of the various hardships that the country has faced, remains open to backing it in its march towards development and progress, as was recently demonstrated again at the Brussels round table. But it is clear that, in a scenario of repeated crises without peace or lasting stability, support from the international community has not been able to find fertile ground so that its efforts can fully achieve the desired objectives. I am convinced that the leaders of Guinea-Bissau, in whom the people have placed their hope and trust, are well aware of that fact and that, in an outpouring of patriotism and sense of responsibility to history, they will do everything within their reach not to jeopardize the great opportunity they have before them to transform their country and significantly improve the living conditions of their people.

The President: I thank Mr. Trovoada for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Patriota.

Mr. De Aguiar Patriota: I wish to thank you, Madam President, for the invitation to address the Security Council this morning in my capacity as the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the

Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Let me also thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Miguel Trovoada for his detailed briefing and update on the political crisis that Guinea-Bissau is facing today. I am particularly grateful for his ongoing efforts to help end the crisis and for his cooperation with the Peacebuilding Commission in this matter and in the broader peacebuilding agenda in Guinea-Bissau.

Last week on 17 August 2015, I chaired a meeting of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC to discuss the situation in Guinea-Bissau and ways for the PBC to respond to the escalation of a crisis that had begun as tension between President Vaz and former Prime Minister Simões Pereira. At that meeting, I reported a telephone conversation I had with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Trovoada on Friday, 14 August. The configuration also heard a comprehensive briefing by Mr. João Honwana, Director of the Africa II Division of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). Their insightful input enabled members of the PBC to have a useful discussion. A statement was issued on 18 August in which the PBC expressed concern that recent political developments might undermine the progress achieved so far and risk destabilizing the fragile political situation in the country and compromise economic progress. In the statement, the PBC regretted that national, regional and international efforts to help resolve the political crisis, in particular the Security Council statement of 12 August (SC/12007) calling for the resumption of dialogue and the statement of the representatives of the international community in Bissau issued on 10 August, as well as the engagement of the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union, had not prevented an escalation of the crisis.

The PBC called for the resumption of political dialogue in order to address the current tensions, with full respect for the national Constitution and the rule of law, and for the national stakeholders to find a concerted way out of the current political crisis. To complement the briefing and suggestions of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General Trovoada, let me offer three main comments.

First, the current crisis carries the risk of having a negative impact on the already fragile economic situation, the stability of the country and its democratic gains. The PBC believes that Guinea-Bissau was making good progress towards stabilization and development since the elections of 2014 and the round table held in Brussels in March 2015. Our main goal should be to prevent possible escalation of the political crisis to undermine the progress achieved so far. The PBC and the international community as a whole have invested in those processes and in the overall peacebuilding agenda in Guinea-Bissau. The efforts undertaken by the PBC have greatly contributed to the holding of free, fair and transparent elections, resulting in a legitimate, competent and inclusive Government for the first time in the history of the country.

For its part, since September 2013, the Peacebuilding Fund has allocated approximately $4.8 million to contribute to establishing the constitutional order, filling crucial gaps through a package of immediate-response-facility projects, which include support for the Electoral Commission, peace dividends through employment for youth and women, joint work of the DPA and the High-level Commission for Planning, electoral security, the media during and after the elections, women's participation in the elections and the Transnational Crime Unit in Bissau as part of the West Africa Coast Initiative. More recently, the Peacebuilding Fund has approved a new peacebuilding priority plan, amounting to $10 million to help the Government implement crucial reforms.

Secondly, the nature of the crisis illustrates that there may be space for debates on better delineating the spheres of competence of the President and the Prime Minister so as to avoid it becoming a source of instability and fragility in an otherwise promising environment. In that regard, should Bissau-Guineans eventually decide to go forward with a political reform and request for support, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries are well positioned to provide the expertise that may be required for a revision of the Constitution.

Thirdly, it is worth noting that the various partners of Guinea-Bissau have been consistent, speaking with one voice, in their engagement on the crisis. The role played by the region as well as the coherence demonstrated by international partners will remain a key element to achieve any sustainable solution. In that vein, one cannot overemphasize that the current political deadlock can be overcome only by Bissau-Guineans themselves, through a constructive dialogue based on full respect for the constitutional provisions and the rule of law. The success of Guinea-Bissau is in the hands of its Government and people.

To conclude, allow me to point out that the PBC will continue to complement the work of the Security Council in providing support and advice to the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to address the current crisis and to implement the broader peacebuilding agenda in the country.

The President: I thank Mr. De Aguiar Patriota for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Da Gama (Guinea-Bissau): I thank you, Madam President, for inviting my delegation to the Security Council. I wish to congratulate you on Nigeria's presidency of the Council for the month of August and to wish the Council successful deliberations. It is an honour to see you presiding at this important meeting on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, a country in which Nigeria is very much present and engaged.

Allow me to express my special thanks to His Excellency Secretary-General B ¬ Ki-Moon for his report on Guinea-Bissau (S/2015/626) and for his personal engagement on the latest developments in my country. The work of his Special Representative, Mr. Miguel Trovoada, of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau team and of all United Nations offices and agencies in Guinea-Bissau are also very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Pariota, Permanent Representative of Brazil, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; Her Excellency Ambassador Sofia Mesquita Borges, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste, on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries; and His Excellency Ambassador Fodé Seck, Permanent Representative of Senegal, on behalf of the Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for their briefings and for their engagement on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

After a short period on a relatively successful path towards peace and development in the country, once again Guinea-Bissau is confronted with a political crisis. The misunderstanding between His Excellency Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic, and His Excellency Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, Prime Minister, unfortunately ended with the dismissal of the Prime Minister, on 12 August, and the nomination of His Excellency Mr. Baciro Djá as the new Prime Minister, on 20 August.

Despite that situation, the calm and civility that has been demonstrated by the population so far on the decision of the National Assembly to seek the necessary legal guidance of the Supreme Court — which also rules on the constitutionality of decisions in the absence of a constitutional court in the country — as to the constitutionality of the nomination of a new Prime Minister by the President is to be congratulated. That democratic method for finding a solution to the existing differences within the highest levels of the country, in our view, offers assurances that, although difficult, there will be a way out of the political crisis through constitutional and legal procedures. The neutral position of the military so far in the political crisis is very much appreciated, and we hope that they will maintain a position of noninterference.

In that context, we understand the resulting frustration of our partners and all the friends of Guinea-Bissau who have worked so hard to help us to consolidate our democracy and to sustain long-lasting peace and development. However, on behalf of the peaceful people of Guinea-Bissau, who time and time again have demonstrated their commitment to the goals of peace and development, we are counting on the hope that the Council and all our partners will remain engaged with the country. Do not give up on the people of Guinea-Bissau. The dreams and aspirations of youth, and of women as mothers, for a better future for their children are at risk. They have high hopes and expectations on the programmes proposed by the Government that led to the successful donor round table on Guinea-Bissau held in Brussels in March, and they are counting on all of the pledges made by all our partners and friends.

We are aware that we Bissau-Guineans bear the primary responsibility for resolving our internal differences, avoiding instability and promoting sustainable development. But without continued and strong engagement on the part of the international community and close and effective monitoring strategies, all of the efforts made risk being compromised. To that end, the support of the international community towards a peaceful resolution of the current situation is very important. It will help restore confidence in Guinea-Bissau and promote an environment conducive to the disbursement of the funds that have been pledged, thereby leading to the implementation of the reforms

and strategic development programmes that have been proposed by the national authorities.

It has been repeated many times in the Council that the instability in Guinea-Bissau will not end with the elections, and the current situation is such an example. The international community should do more to help consolidate stronger institutions. And it should remain alert and work more closely in terms of guidance, through open and frank dialogue with the national authorities and all political stakeholders, as a way to prevent situations such as the one we are facing today.

It is our hope that the country will overcome this crisis and that the relevant political stakeholders, the National Assembly and civil society will remain engaged in constructive dialogue for the good of Guinea-Bissau and its people.

Before concluding, I would like to express our gratitude for the engagement of the international community in following the political situation in our country. I also wish to commend the continued support of the Secretary-General, the head of ECOWAS, namely, the President of Senegal as its current Chair, the President of the Republic of Guinea, the President of Nigeria and all our partners and friends who have tried their best, and are still trying, to mediate and help Guinea-Bissau resolve the current political crisis and regain its course towards the consolidation of peace and achievement of sustainable development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Senegal.

Mr. Ciss (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Senegalese delegation thanks you, Madam President, for allowing us to participate on behalf of the Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We welcome the holding of this meeting of the Security Council devoted to the situation in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. We also take this opportunity to commend your deft handling of the high office of the presidency of the Council for the month of August. Allow me also to commend the detailed and informative briefings by Mr. Trovoada, Mr. De Aguiar Patriota and the Permanent Representative of Guinea-Bissau.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau, which has deteriorated significantly since a decree was issued calling for Prime Minister, Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, to step down, remains troubling, at a time when the country needs more than ever before to forge a robust consensus to overcome the numerous challenges it continues to face. Aware of the need to establish and preserve such consensus in order to contribute to the stabilization of the country, His Excellency President Macky Sall, ECOWAS Chair, has offered his good offices in an attempt to renew dialogue among the principal parties. Moreover, in order to prevent further deterioration of the political climate in Guinea-Bissau, he dispatched, on 23 June, his Minister for Foreign Affairs who held talks with the country's authorities, with a view to bolstering confidence among them in order to re-establish properly functioning institutions. In addition, during his stay, the President's envoy took the opportunity to make courtesy calls of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Trovoada, representative of the European Union Victor Dos Santos, African Union representative Pequeno and ECOWAS representative Ansumana Ceesay.

Subsequently, President José Mário Vaz was received in Dakar on 7 August, in the presence of His Excellency President Alpha Condé of the Republic of Guinea, who was also on an official visit to Dakar, with a view to finding a solution to the political crisis in the country.

Subsequently, on 20 August, President Macky Sall received Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, who carried a message from current President Muhammadu Buhari and had come to gather opinions and advice with a view to a mission that he was due to undertake to Guinea-Bissau, which he ultimately cancelled, following an appointment on that same day of a new Prime Minister, namely, Mr. Baciro Djá. It is therefore regrettable that the various aforementioned efforts were insufficient to put an end to the crisis.

On 24 august, the National Assembly adopted a resolution calling for the new Prime Minister to step down. As we see it, the situation remains particularly delicate. We believe it is important to call on the various parties to show restraint, so as to ensure a better chance for the diplomatic efforts with a view to establishing trust and peace.

For his part, the ECOWAS Chair regretted the stepping down of Prime Minister Pereira. He also reiterated the commitment undertaken by the political actors in Guinea-Bissau in March during the donor conference in Brussels, including those undertaken by President José Mário Vaz and Prime Minister Pereira

working together towards political stability, economic development and security on behalf of the citizens of Guinea-Bissau.

We highlight and welcome the responsible attitude adopted by the army of Guinea-Bissau, which has kept its distance from the events under way, thereby allowing a greater chance of achieving a political solution to this fragile situation.

Confident that a peaceful, lasting solution can be found to the crisis under way, with the valuable assistance of its partners, the ECOWAS Chair is convinced that the building of peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau can be achieved only through a consensual process, which must be inclusive and nationally owned. Where there is respect for the constitutional order, the interest and well-being of the people of Guinea-Bissau will be at the heart of the discussion to bolster national reconciliation, democracy, good governance and development.

The political tensions should in no way obscure the progress achieved thus far by Guinea-Bissau, particularly in terms of the constitutional revision process, combating corruption through strengthening the judicial system and improving the administration, pursuing defence and security reform and the establishment by the National Assembly of a commission on peace and stability, in order to accelerate the reconciliation process.

The situation I have described calls for pursuing structural defence, security and justice reforms, promoting the rule of law and socioeconomic development, in line with the promotion and protection of human rights and combating impunity.

ECOWAS therefore welcomes the success of the donor round table on Guinea-Bissau held on 25 March in Brussels, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union. At the conference, international partners supported the Government's National Strategic and Operational Plan for 2015-2020, with pledges standing at $1.2 billion. In that respect, the Economic Community of West African States calls on international partners to remain strongly mobilized and committed in their support to the stabilization process in Guinea-Bissau, particularly by delivering on their commitments undertaken at that occasion. Such support remains crucial for conducting the aforementioned reforms.

For its part, ECOWAS is continuing its efforts to help Guinea-Bissau maintain peace and security and to support the reconciliation process. Aware of the importance of security and defence sector reform in the stabilization process, the forty-seventh ordinary session of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, held in Accra on 19 May, extended the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau until 31 December. In any case, it goes without saying that security sector reform also requires increased efforts to curb drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in all its forms and manifestations.

The challenges ahead to achieve stabilization in Guinea-Bissau remain enormous. The normalization of the situation in the country will undoubtedly require bolstering democratic gains and coordinating the actions of the various partners in support of efforts made by the Government of Guinea-Bissau. To that end, ECOWAS remains more than ever willing to pursue the work launched with all its partners in order to help Guinea-Bissau to emerge from the current situation.

Allow me to commend the special emphasis placed by the Security Council on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, as well as to commend the efforts of the Secretary-General and of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, in addition to the important support of all the bodies of the United Nations system, the European Union, the African Union, Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

The hope kindled of a return to constitutional order following presidential and legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau must not be extinguished. That is the very essence of the commitment of ECOWAS, including Senegal, towards lasting peace and the harmonious socioeconomic development in Guinea-Bissau.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Timor-Leste.

Mrs. Mesquita Borges (Timor-Leste): At the outset, let me thank you, Madam President, for presiding over this meeting and on assumping the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I thank Mr. Trovoada, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, for his briefing to the Council and his efforts to resolve the crisis.

I am honoured to address the Council on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), whose members include Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, Sao Tomé and Principe and my

own country, Timor-Leste. We welcome the statements issued by the Council on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, as well as the Secretary-General's reports (S/2015/619 and S/2015/626), whose recommendations we fully endorse.

Since the peaceful, free and fair elections of 2014, in which the people of Guinea-Bissau clearly expressed their desire for stability and their commitment to democratic rule, much progress has been made in Guinea-Bissau, not only in the provision of services to the population, or the payment of arrears, but also in the important steps made concerning the much-needed reforms and on consolidation of the rule of law. It is vital for Guinea-Bissau and its people that the gains made are not jeopardized, and that the reforms continue to be implemented.

The CPLP member States regret the recent political developments and remain deeply concerned at the current situation in Guinea-Bissau. We call on all stakeholders, namely, the organs of sovereignty, the political parties represented in Parliament, civil society and others, to engage in constructive political dialogue. Statesmanship is required to defuse the current political crisis, with full respect of the Constitution and the rule of law, as well as the spirit of inclusion.

While the authorities in Guinea-Bissau are solely responsible for resolving the political crisis, it is crucial that the process fully respect the Constitution. It is equally paramount to the continued stability of the country that the reforms initiated be pursued, especially the reforms of the security and justice sectors and the fight against impunity. We welcome the fact that the armed forces of Guinea-Bissau are complying with their constitutional role and the law by avoiding any interference in the present political crisis.

The national Strategic and Operational Plan, entitled "Terra Ranka", reflects the aspirations of Bissau-Guineans for greater political stability and socioeconomic development, as well as for the consolidation of the rule of law and the protection and promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The document, presented by the President and the Prime Minister at the donor round table in Brussels in March, garnered the support of the international partners. The current political crisis could undermine the progress already made in that regard, and compromise continued economic progress.

We call on the international community to continue to support Guinea-Bissau and its people in the implementation of the State reforms and development plans. At the same time, we stress that the key responsibility for achieving the necessary stable environment of political and institutional cooperation rests on the national stakeholders.

In conclusion, we would like to recognize the concerted efforts of the international community to assist Guinea-Bissau in the crisis. In that regard, we appreciate and commend the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission, in particular those of Ambassador Patriota, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration, who convened an opportune meeting on 17 August to evaluate the situation. The meeting resulted in a statement that the CPLP fully endorses.

We also welcome the efforts made by regional leaders and by regional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In particular, we thank ECOWAS for its mediation efforts and for the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau's important role in maintaining peace and security.

The CPLP stands ready, together with the rest of the international community, to continue its support to Guinea-Bissau, while fully respecting national ownership. I take this opportunity to inform Council members that, at its meeting of the Council of Ministers held in Dili in July, the CPLP decided to deploy to Guinea-Bissau in the near future a joint mission of the President of the CPLP Council of Ministers and the Executive Secretary.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.